

## Thomas Parke Gere

**Medal of Honor: Civil War - Issued February 24, 1865**

**“Capture of the flag of the 4<sup>th</sup> Mississippi”**

**By Linda Sugerman, Maria Sanford DAR Chapter**



**Birth Date and Location:** December 10, 1842 in Wellsburg, Chemung County, New York

**Entered Service:** In 1862 he enlisted in Company B of the Fifth Minnesota Infantry Regiment at the age of 19.

**Conflict:** Distinguished himself in both the Indian Wars and the Civil War. Lieut. Gere was awarded the Medal of Honor for his service in the Civil War

**Death:** September 3, 1969 in Chicago, Illinois at the age of 80

**Early Years:** Gere was the youngest of eight children of George and Sarah Gere. He moved with his family to Minnesota in 1852 and to Chatfield in Fillmore County in 1862 when he was 12. He was a student in 1858-1859 at the Chatfield Academy and assisted his principal, Gen. J. W. Bishop, in the survey of government lands in southwestern Minnesota.

**The War Years:** Lieut. Gere was mustered as a private in Company B, 5<sup>th</sup> Minnesota Volunteer Infantry, January 17, 1862. In March of 1862 instead of heading off to the glory and honor of the Civil War, Company B was assigned to relieve two companies of men of the 4<sup>th</sup> Minnesota Regiment who were garrisoned at Fort Ridgely, Minnesota. Gere enlisted as a private but rose rapidly in the ranks to acting company first sergeant, then second lieutenant. He commanded a force of about 30 soldiers who repelled attacks of Santee Sioux while he was seriously ill with

the mumps. The conflict with the Dakota was the result of starving Indians not receiving their treaty annuity. Gere saw his first action as an officer and was considered as one of the heroic defenders of Fort Ridgley in August 1862. His company rejoined the Fifth Regiment, December 1, 1862 at Oxford, Mississippi, and Lieut. Gere therefore participated with it in the following campaigns, battles and actions. Campaign through West Tennessee, January and February 1862; Campaign against Vicksburg, March, April and May, 1863; Action at Mississippi Springs, Mississippi, May 13, 1863; Assault on Jackson, Mississippi, May 14, 1863; Assault on Vicksburg, May 22, 1863; Action at Satartia, Mississippi, June 4<sup>th</sup>, Mechanicsburg, Mississippi, June 7<sup>th</sup>, Richmond, Louisiana, June 14, 1863, Siege and Surrender of Vicksburg, July 4, 1863; Campaign through Central Mississippi, December, 1863; Red River Expedition, Louisiana, March. April and May. 1864; Assault on Fort De Russy, Louisiana, March 14, 1864; Actions at Henderson Hill, Louisiana, March 21, Grand Ecore, Louisiana, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, Comptre, Louisiana, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1864, Battle of Pleasant Hill, Louisiana, April 9, 1864 Action at Cloutierville, Louisiana, April 24<sup>th</sup>, Bayou Rapids, April 26<sup>th</sup>, Moore's Plantation, Louisiana May 3<sup>rd</sup>, Bayou La Monre, Louisiana, May 6, Markersville, Louisiana, May 16<sup>th</sup>, Bayou de Glaise, Louisiana, May 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, Lake Chicot Arkansas, June 6, 1864; Campaign through Northern Mississippi, August, 1864; Action at Oxford, Mississippi, August 21<sup>st</sup>, Abbeyville Mississippi, August 25, 1864, Campaign through Arkansas and Missouri, September and October, 1864; Battles of Nashville, Tennessee, December 15 and 16, 1864; Campaign through Tennessee and Mississippi, December 1864, and January, 1865; Campaign against Mobile, Alabama, March and April 1865. On December 16, the Minnesotans charged the enemy lines and Gere's taking the colors of the 4<sup>th</sup> Mississippi Infantry earned him the Medal of Honor. His citation reads "Capture of flag of the 4<sup>th</sup> Mississippi." His Medal of Honor was issued on February 24, 1865. Lieut. Gere mustered out of the army April 5, 1865.

**Post War Years:** Subsequent to the war, Lieut. Gere followed the profession of Civil Engineer. For ten years he was the superintendent of the Sioux City division of the Saint Paul and Sioux City Railroad. Later he acquired large property interests in manufacturing lines located in Sioux City, Iowa. Lieut. Gere married Florence Irene Howard January 1, 1869. They had a daughter, Florence Bertha Gere who lived less than a month. His wife Florence died in 1871. Lieut. Gere married Mary Emma Shepard September 16, 1874. They had four children: Madge Shephard Gere Swan (1877-1949), Thomas P. Jr (1886-?), Frances Shepard Gere Carter (1887-1972) and Champlin Hedges Gere (1889-1969). Lieut. Gere lived in St. Paul. MN in 1880, Fourth Ward Iowa in 1895, Sioux City, Iowa in 1900 and died in Chicago, IL on January 8, 1912. He was survived by his wife, daughters, Madge Swan and Frances Carter and sons Thomas, Jr. and Champlin. Lieut. Gere was buried at Arlington National Cemetery

## Documentation

- Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States Minnesota Commandery. In Memoriam Circular No 7 Series 1912 Whole No 439
- Thomas Gere: "19 Years old and in charge of a fort". Allies Newsletter for Members and Friends of the Military History Society of Minnesota' Summer, 2013, Vol XXI, No.3
- "Thomas Parke Gere, First Lieutenant, United States Army"  
[Arlingtoncemetery.net/tpgere.htm](http://Arlingtoncemetery.net/tpgere.htm)
- "Thomas Parke Gere" [Findagrave.com](http://Findagrave.com)
- "Thomas Parke Gere, First Lieutenant and Adjutant with the Fifth Minnesota Volunteer Infantry. Medal of Honor Recipient" MN OPEDIA
- "Thomas P. Gere" Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia