

The Last Soldier Project Checklist

1. Contact the media - A press release/interview with the camp commander or the memorials officer should be provided to the media. Emphasis should be made that this is a community effort, not only finding the Last Soldier but also raising funds for the plaque.
2. Trust – You may wish to consider setting up a Memorial Trust tax-free corporation to receive money for the monument or future memorial projects within your state/county. This provides the contributors with a tax break for the contributions. A word of caution, you will have to consult with an attorney to have the proper documents drawn up. Filing fee in the state of OHIO are \$125.00 UP FRONT. As we said this is ONLY something to consider.
3. Contacts- As this is intended to be a way to bring the efforts of the Order into the public arena you should contact local schools, veterans' organizations, and local historical societies. And the Boy/Girls Scouts. (A great project for an up and coming Eagle Scout) Talk up the project, solicit their assistance, not only in finding the Last Soldier, but contributing to the plaque.
4. Found- Once the Last Soldier is found, again contact the media. Make sure you identify the person or organization that located the Last Soldier. Remember it is a community project. When you address the media, have more than just the veteran's name, give them as much information as you can about the veteran. Place of birth, rank, regiment was he born in the county or how did he come to be in your county (if known). What engagements did the regiments serve, name of some of his descendants (it could be a way to get new recruits). Also inform the media that you are looking for descendants of the Last Soldier to participate in the ceremony.
5. Survey- As soon as the Last Soldier is located, survey the gravesite. Some things to look for are: Does the veteran have a headstone or is it a family marker? If the veteran does not have a headstone, order one from the VA. It does take some time for the gravestones from the VA to arrive, this is why you should survey the gravesite EARLY. Depending upon your area, the camp may be required to set the stone. A word of caution, these headstones weigh in excess of 240 pounds, so it will take a working party to manage the setting. Or you may wish to speak to the cemetery caretaker or the county commissioners for assistance in setting the headstone as well as the memorial plaque. The Last Soldier should NOT be attached to any headstone, VA or Family.
6. Covering- If you have someone in your camp that sews, (or can talk their wife into sewing), have them make a covering for the memorial plaque that can be used for the "unveiling" at the ceremony. A dark blue fabric is nice and gold star appliques look nice as well.

7. DOCUMENT DOCUMENT DOCUMENT- This is the primary object of this project. Part of the submission for funds from the Order will be the inclusion of a grave registration form with your request. A photo/sketch of the Last Soldier, if possible, would be nice. (Another reason to look for the descendants of the Last Soldier).
8. FUNDS- You will need money for the plaque, stone, and cost of the printed program. The Monuments and Memorials fund will provide “seed-money” for the project (\$300.00).
9. Contacts (again)- Once you have all the funds necessary to get the plaque and stone AGAIN contact the media declaring success. State the time and place of the ceremony. Also give instructions to the gravesite as some of these are in out of the way places. As early as possible send out letters to state and local officials, Veterans Groups, and schools asking them to attend the ceremony. If you do not have a Civil War attired Honor Guard ask the local Veterans’ group to provide a firing squad. If you need appropriate Civil War music ask a local high school band if they can provide it. (You may wish to make this request when you make your visits as outlined in paragraph 3 of the checklist). This would also be a good time to ask the schools if the history classes could have a “field trip” for the ceremony. What better way to teach history than to see it in action.
10. Photo coverage- Ensure that the press is there. Also ensure that one of the camp members takes pictures and send in an article to the BANNER.