Finding Proof of Military Service

The below is from the "Join" tab, then "How to Become a Member" on the ALA National website (https://www.alaforveterans.org/Joining/):

If the person who provides your eligibility is deceased, acceptable eligibility documents include:

a. DD-214 Discharge Papers (not issued/called this until after the Korean War)
b. Official Military Orders (or a military ID)
c. Official Military Service Citations/Awards
d. Letters related to the veteran's military service. Must be on official government letterhead
e. Certificate from the VA records center (National Archives & Records) in St. Louis**
f. Data from the back of older discharges

**Military records can be requested FREE online from the National Archives and Records Administration (in St. Louis) by visiting their website (see below for detailed instructions) or calling 866-272-6272.
Note: There was a fire at this building in 1973 and some records were destroyed, but they will inform you if this occurred with your veteran's records.

**The preferred method of submitting a request to the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) is via the Internet. In some cases using a browser other than Internet Explorer may create problems with data entry. The NPRC provides copies of documents from military personnel records to authorized requesters. The web-based application will provide better service on these requests by eliminating the mailroom processing time. You may access this application at: http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/. Click "Launch E Vet Records", click "Continue" and follow the prompts. At the end, there is a form to print and then fax or mail to the fax number or address listed.

The following resources may be of additional assistance in locating these kinds of records.

- Please be advised that many certificates of discharge prior to 1979 may not appear to be "official" documents and may have been typed onto a sheet of paper. If you are unsure, please ask your local American Legion Post Adjutant or a service officer. Locate your American Legion Department Service Officer at www.legion.org/serviceofficer or download The American Legion Claims Coach Mobile App through Google Play or ITunes App Store.

- The County Clerk and Recorders Office where the veteran resided (veterans used to have to register with their county before or after they returned home from service)

- A funeral home may have kept a copy if military honors were provided. If buried in a National Cemetery, the cemetery will likely have a copy. You can locate the national cemetery where they are buried here: https://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/

- Monument companies if VA headstone or marker was ordered.

- If the veteran had utilized a VA Home Loan there may be a copy of the DD214 with the title documentation.

- Veterans who have signed up for EBENEFITS through the Veterans Administration may be able to obtain a printable copy. www.ebenefits.va.gov

- The State Director of Veterans Affairs may have received a copy of the veterans DD214 at the time of discharge from military service. This will be specific to the state in which the veterans home of record.

*Obituaries are not sufficient proof of service as family members write the obituary themselves so dates of service and military-related information in them may not be accurate. Ancestry.com and other similar reports aren't as well. Some Posts may accept these as part of multiple documents that might together all serve to show "due diligence" was taken in providing proof of eligibility.

*Pictures of headstones, even if in a national cemetery, and dog tags are generally not accepted unless other documents from above are included with it.

Note: This is not an official document or resource from ALA National HQ. This list was put together by a knowledgeable ALA member wanting to assist others in helping those searching for ALA eligibility.