

Eugene Blackwell earned his Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) eligibility by serving on active duty in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan from December 10, 2008, to September 7, 2009. During his service, Eugene served as an advisor to the Afghan Corps Surgeon, a role that underscored his expertise and dedication. He retired honorably as a Colonel (O-6) in 2014 from the Army National Guard and Reserve after serving in various capacities including Platoon Commander, Battalion Detachment Commander, Command of the Health and Dental Clinic, and Battalion Commander.

Eugene has been an active member of the VFW since 2009, joining VFW Post 311 as a Life Member. His leadership roles within the VFW include serving as a trustee, Junior Vice Commander, Commander, and Chief of Staff. Under his command, Post 311 earned All American status for the years 2013-2014 and 2014-2015. His service extended to the district level where he held positions as Junior Vice Commander, Senior Vice Commander, and Commander. At the state level, he serves as the Department of Illinois State Commander elected during the 2025 state convention. Nationally, Eugene contributes as a member of the National Bylaws Study Group, appointed by past National Commander Matthew (Fritz) Michelcic in 2020. He is a Gold Legacy Life Member, a Centennial Life Member of the VFW National Home, and a member of the Military Order of the Cootie – Pup Tent 42. Eugene's commitment to VFW was further recognized when he was elected as the Department Senior Vice Commander during the 2024 State Convention.

Eugene has worked for over thirty years as a Registered Pharmacist with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Currently, he is a retired federal employee.

In addition to his professional and military service, Eugene is deeply involved in his community. He is a member of New Faith Baptist Church International, where he contributes to the Music Ministry and Christian Education. Eugene has been inducted into the Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem. As a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Theta Mu Lambda Chapter, Eugene has served as past president and currently holds the position of financial secretary. He also chairs the Theta Mu Lambda Charitable Foundation (TMLCF), which has awarded over \$300,000 to high school graduates pursuing higher education.

Eugene is married to Mattie Blackwell, and they have three adult children and three grandchildren.