

IOWA CITY VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

# the MONTHLY CHECKUP

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## VA Pharmacy Technician inducted to the Veteran's Trail

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With a military career spanning 37 years, Lawson Coapstick, a pharmacy technician at the Iowa City VA Health Care System, was recognized for his dedication on Memorial Day, May 28, when he became an honoree of the Veteran's Trail at Coralville Lake.

"He is friendly and outgoing and always looking to improve things for our Vets," Chief Pharmacist Kathy Rinehart said. "I commend him for all he does and the work he puts in."

Coapstick, who has worked at the Iowa City VA Medical Center since 2001, enlisted straight out of high school in May 1973, despite his father's wishes that he try school first.

"I wasn't interested in school, I just wanted to work," Coapstick said.

Once he promised his dad that he wouldn't enlist in the Army or the Marine Corps, his father sur-

rendered and Coapstick became a dental technician in the U.S. Navy, serving a six year enlistment. During his time working with the dental officers, though, he changed his mind about college. When his service ended, Coapstick attended Upper Iowa University, remaining involved in the military through ROTC.

After earning his degree in Physical Education, Coapstick spent three years in active duty for the Army as a Medical Service Corps Officer.

"There was no Navy ROTC," Coapstick said to explain why he didn't go back to the Navy. During his years in the Army, he also served in the Iowa Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserves. He deployed to Iraq in 2003 and Afghanistan in 2009 for Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. His induction into the Veteran's

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Photo by Valerie Buckingham

Lawson Coapstick, pharmacy technician at Iowa City VA HCS, retrieves a filled prescription from the ScriptPro machine.

## IOWA CITY VA MEDICAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Did you know that in 1997 the Iowa City VA Medical Research Foundation was established as a 501(C)(3) nonprofit corporation to assist and improve the healthcare provided to veterans and their families? The Foundation's vision is to discover knowledge and create innovations that help advance the health and care of our nation's heroes, Veterans. The issues our nation's heroes face are unique and complex. Many times, their health problems are related to military service. It is crucial to discover knowledge through scientific inquiry about these medical conditions to ensure veterans receive the best health care - the care they deserve in return for their selfless service.

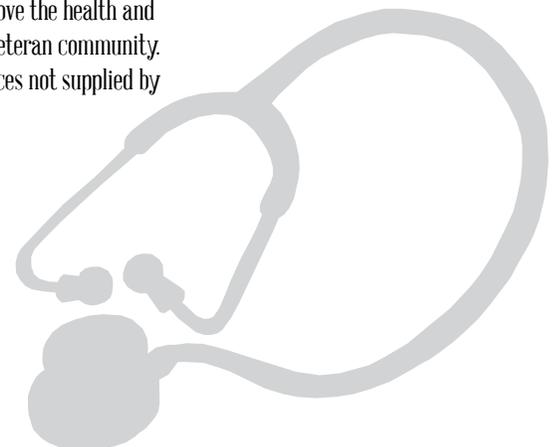
Continued research is needed in order for healthcare to advance. The quality of the care provided to veterans depends on knowledge gained from research efforts. This is why the VA funds many research projects; but unfortunately, the VA cannot cover them all. The Iowa City VA Medical Research Foundation works to close the gap. Our mission statement is to mobilize resources to improve the health and well being of the veteran community. By seeking resources not supplied by

the VA, the Foundation is able to support research projects that would not be completed without it. The Foundation seeks funding through many sources:

- Private grants
- Government grants
- Nonprofit agencies
- Public donations
- Planned giving

Areas of medical research receiving support from the Foundation include cancer, vision, rheumatology, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, traumatic brain injury, post traumatic stress disorder, hepatitis, smoking cessation, mental health issues, and continuity of care.

To learn more about the Iowa City VA Medical Research Foundation please visit [www.icvafoundation.com](http://www.icvafoundation.com) or call 319-688-3542.



## COAPSTICK

Trail at Coralville Lake in Coralville, Iowa is not Coapstick's first recognition of his hard work and dedication. He earned numerous medals while serving including the Legion of Merit and the Bronze Star Medal.

"It's nice to be recognized," said Coapstick of his awards. "It's kind of cool, it's there," he said casually.

The people he worked with are what really kept Coapstick in the military all those years.

"It's hard to find people who understand you, who have the same goals and values as you," he said. "That's why it's hard to take awards, because we're doing what we said we would."

As a man who carries a card with the Army's values in his wallet and a magazine cutout of the quote, "A Veteran is someone who, in his life, wrote a blank check made payable to The USA for an amount "up to and including my life," it's not hard to understand his nonchalant opinion of his Veteran's Trail induction.

"You don't expect [the awards]. You like it, but you're wondering why me, why not someone else," Coapstick explained.

Though he may question why him, it's his awards from his hard work and dedication that have earned him, and seven other Veterans, an induction on Memorial Day.

The trail, which was dedicated as the Veteran's Trail on Memorial Day in 1989, is meant to honor all Veterans who have served in the military. "It's a place for quiet reflection and for commemorating those who have gone above and beyond the call of duty," said Jeffrey Peck, natural resource specialist and ranger at Coralville Lake.

Including Coapstick and the seven other inductees of this year, the trail will hold dedications to 157 Veterans.

The criteria for being selected as an inductee are not easy. Peck said that a press release is sent out to local newspapers each January asking for nominations. From those nominations, inductees are selected if they have been honorably discharged, have a long term residence in Johnson County, are currently living, and have at least a Purple Heart or higher.

The number of inductees fluctuates from year to year, depending on the number of nominations and, of those, who meets the criteria.

"I've inducted as many as 12 and as few as one," said Peck. Although the induction honors Coapstick as a Soldier, his dedication has not diminished since his military retirement in 2010. Self-described as a "troublemaker," Rinehart still describes him as "amazing" and always going the extra mile.

"I like the people I serve. I look at the patients as a reflection of myself," said Coapstick.

## AROUND THE WATER COOLER

- On Wednesday, June 6, we installed the first of three replacement boilers at the medical center. The boilers were installed in 1978 and have a life span of 30-40 years. They're not as effective, so we're upgrading. The last two boilers will be replaced within the next three months.
- The Clinical Specific Initiatives (CSI) a 10,160 square foot addition on the North side of the facility should be completed by the end of July. This is where polytrauma clinic, comp and pen will be located.
- Remodeling of the basement blood draw is approximately three months behind schedule. The area is being remodeled to add five blood-draw stations, an infusion room, urinalysis bathroom, new reception and waiting area and a new conference room.
- The facility has been approved for a new Operating Room suite. We hope to start construction on the suite in the fall.
- Construction is approximately 98 percent complete on the Fifth Floor, West wing remodeling. This wing is being remodeled for private patient rooms, private baths, ceiling lifts, etc.

The Iowa City VA Health Care System has been approved for a new parking ramp. The construction contract should be awarded in August. We hope to start construction in the fall. We are checking into other options for temporary patient parking during the construction phase. Once we decide on a temporary parking solution, we will provide that information in this newsletter, on our Facebook page and internet page.

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[www.facebook.com/VAiowacity](http://www.facebook.com/VAiowacity) or to  
view our website visit [www.iowacity.va.gov](http://www.iowacity.va.gov).



**VA**  
HEALTH  
CARE

Defining  
**EXCELLENCE**  
in the 21st Century

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