

Burnett, Vet Counselor Joins WPCC Staff



JIM BURNETT

Jim Burnett, a native of McDowell County and a veteran of the war in Vietnam, has been appointed to the staff of Western Piedmont Community College as coordinator, Office of Veterans Affairs. The appointment was announced by Dr. Gordon C. Blank, president of the college.

Burnett, who lives in Marion, will be based in the Office of Student Services, where he will assist other veterans in obtaining and making use of their V.A. benefits for higher education.

A veteran of three years in the U.S. Army, Burnett spent a year in Vietnam as a combat intelligence specialist. Following his discharge he used his G.I. benefits to return to school at Western Piedmont Community College, where he expects to complete his studies during the fall quarter, as a part-time student, for the degree of Associate in Applied Science in Business Administration.

Before his military service, Burnett attended classes at WPCC and worked summer as a life guard, a pipe fitter, and at various factory jobs. A former high school letterman in both baseball and football, and an Eagle Scout, he now plays industrial league base-

ball with the Marion Freshers and is commissioner of Boy Scout Troop 208 in Marion.

Worried about enlistment, like so many young Americans he dropped out of school to join the army in 1968. While in the service, he made friends with other enlistees who already had advanced degrees, and decided to continue his education when he got out.

"I figured I wasn't going to get anywhere without trying", he says. He returned to WPCC in the winter quarter of 1971.

His advice to other veterans is to take full advantage of their G.I. benefits before they expire.

"The ones who got out before June 1, 1966 will lose it all if they don't take advantage of their benefits before June next year," he says. "They've only got nine months left, but if they start in the fall quarter they can still collect up to \$220 a month if they're single -- more, if they're married and have dependents.

"That's nearly \$2,000," he points out.

To enroll for the fall quarter at WPCC, veterans must apply for admission and file for benefits before the September 7 registration date. Classes start September 10.

Veterans who want to enroll must take their discharge papers (DD-214 forms) to Burnett, whose office is in Room E-102, next to the Office of Student Services. He has the forms needed to apply for higher education benefits, and will help students to fill them out, before referring them to their faculty advisors.

Veterans who have not graduated from high school can get supplementary benefits, without cutting into their higher education benefits, to earn a special high school diploma at WPCC, and then begin receiving regular benefits for higher education.