

# Football's Fun, Safer, Too

## CW's Cole Swaps Bullets for Pigskin

By BILL WEURDING

When it comes to being combat ready, Cal Western linebacker Dennis Cole has an edge on most of the area's collegiate football players.

He's been through it all first hand—spending half of his two-year Army hitch in Vietnam.

Hence, it wasn't too difficult for Cole to adapt to staying low on tackles after spending 365 days overseas staying low on bullets.

Cole will walk onto the type of battlefield he prefers tomorrow afternoon at 1:30 when the Westerners travel to the University of California at San Diego for the first of what is expected to become a great area rivalry.

If Cole performs against the Tritons anything like he did against the Viet Cong, coach Walt Hackett's winless Tritons (0-3) are in for a long afternoon.

During his stint with the 1st Calvary Division Air Wing, Cole earned enough medals to fill a football helmet, including the Silver Star—the third highest combat medal behind the Medal of Honor and the Distinguished Service Medal.

"We were walking down this mountain," Cole recalled, "and was in front of everybody. I came upon about 40 cooks sitting in ambush but they were eating lunch. I fired and, dropped the first two I

saw. Most of the rest of 'em took off and got away.

"The commanding officer said I charged them," Cole said, "but actually I was just trying to save my skin."

Along with the Silver Star, Cole also received the Bronze Star for meritorious service as a squad leader, the Air Medal for 25 combat air assaults and numerous other medals including the Purple Heart after suffering a punji stick wound.

That "365 days", as Cole calls it, is something to be proud of but the modest Cole would prefer to look at the future. Right now he only has thoughts about the Tritons.

"We're going to hold them scoreless," the former Reseda

High football star said positively.

That would be fine with Westerner coach Bob Dinaberg. The Westerners (2-3) are heavily favored but Dinaberg and his club are far from overconfident.

"Our kids realize the potential of UCSD," Dinaberg said. "Their team reminds me of our club two years ago. We had about the same small number of players (33) and lots of them were freshman, too, but we still beat a few people. UCSD is capable of doing the same.

The Westerners have Cole though, and he's already a proven winner.



**COMBAT'S OLD STUFF TO DENNIS COLE**  
Cal Western linebacker changes battlefields