

Larry's leapin' lizard

CHU LAI - The Loch Ness Monster has nothing on the Song Chang Creepy Crawler, but it does know better than to tangle with a group of infantrymen on patrol.

Creepy's troubles began when a six-man patrol from Co. B, 3rd Bn., 21st Inf., 23rd Infantry Division, disturbed its abode in the forest primeval along the

banks of the Song Chang (Chang River) leading into Hiep Duc Valley 30 miles northwest of Chu Lai.

Lt. James F. Dowling was leading the patrol in search of a suitable crossing point for the company along the north bank of the river.

"We were heading up a little hill, moving low because of the

bamboo hanging over the top of us," related Dowling. "I was third man in the patrol and when I heard shots up ahead I went to check it out."

What he found was his normally steady point man, Pfc. Larry Flurry, visibly shaken after being attacked by a large, hideous creature which had charged from out of a clump of bushes in front of him.

"At first I thought it was a crocodile," mused the young platoon leader, "but I didn't think they had crocodiles in Vietnam. In any event, it had scurried back into the bushes so fast that we couldn't get a really good look at it."

"While in its death throes, it made a low grunting noise. When that stopped I moved the bushes apart and pulled out a seven-foot-long lizard weighing about 60 pounds with dry skin and yellow and orange markings on its body.

"We all just stood there looking at it in amazement. Flurry wasn't too thrilled about the whole thing, though, especially when we examined its claws, inch-and-a-half long teeth and forked tongue," remarked Dowling.

Bad weather, which prevented helicopter resupply to the unit, made it impossible for the 196th Bde. troops to get their prize catch back to a rear area and after a day and a half of toting it around, they had to abandon it.

As Dowling put it, "Curious as we all were about the lizard, the smell just got too much for anyone to handle."

The Gimlets' prize catch turned out to be an "unusually large" Asian monitor lizard.

That fact became known when a photo of the reptile was shown to Spec. 5 Ronald G. Dalbec, head animal technician at the 175th Veterinary Detachment in Chu Lai.



ANOTHER LIZARD STORY, but this time the Gimlets proved that it wasn't just another "fish" story.