

May 19, 1968

Dear Mom and Dad,

How is everyone? I hope fine. When you receive this letter, May will be just about over. I will be down to six months and a couple of days left in December which amounts to nothing. I'm going to have a big celebration when I leave Vietnam. And when I get back to the World, I won't forget to keep the seventh day open to the Lord.

I guess the time is passing by fairly fast for you, because you're pretty busy. "But not for me." Received all your letters, Ma, and I'm always glad to hear from a squared-away mother, as the Army would say it about a Number 1 soldier. It all just comes to the heading—you're the best in my books, Ma.

Also heard from Aunt Flo. I know you will thank her for me, about writing to me, it was nice of her. So far you're doing good, Ma, about writing. Keep up the good work. Now I want to let you know you will always be Number 1 mother in my books.

Heard you got Nancy a portable hair dryer. I think it was nice of you to always look out for the other person. But, remember, stay like you are, and don't let them take advantage of a well-natured mother. Also, keep up the good work, and keep the letters flowing in. Say hi to everyone.

Love,
Rick

P.S. Watch my return address. I'm all over—
everywhere.

Sp/4 Richard A. Carlson, a medic attached to Company D, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), operating in I Corps, had been in Vietnam four months when he was killed while ministering to the wounded during an ambush on 24 May 1968. "Doc, I'm a mess," he said to a fellow medic. "Oh, God, I don't want to die. Mother, I don't want to die. Oh, God, don't let me die." These were his last words. He was 20 years old.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Why do you think Lt. Sullivan feels guilty for earning a Silver Star?
2. Why does Captain Chastant enjoy "trivial" news from home?
3. What emotions do some or all of these soldiers have in common?