

Build a detailed fictional hospital program based on real 1960s Minnesota institutions. Map out her training experience.

Absolutely — let’s build you a **fully realized, historically grounded fictional nursing school** in Minnesota circa 1967–68 and map out your character’s **accelerated training experience** in a way that feels authentic, fits your plot timeline, and mirrors how real diploma programs operated.

Below is a complete, ready-to-use institution with structure, culture, curriculum, and a believable accelerated track.

Fictional Hospital-Based Nursing School (Modeled on Real 1960s Minnesota Programs)

St. Brigid’s Hospital School of Nursing

Location: Minneapolis, Minnesota **Founded:** 1908 **Affiliation:** Catholic hospital run by the Sisters of St. Brigid (loosely inspired by St. Mary’s, St. Catherine’s, and Fairview programs of the era) **Program Type:** 3-year diploma RN program with an *advanced-standing track* for students with prior college coursework **Reputation:** Known for rigorous clinical training, strong surgical and emergency nursing rotations, and a high NCLEX (then “State Board”) pass rate.

Why this institution works for your story

- Minneapolis had several hospital diploma programs in the 1960s, so this fits the landscape.
- Catholic hospitals often offered **accelerated or advanced-standing options** for students with prior science credits.
- The Sisters running the program give you built-in structure, discipline, and character dynamics.
- The hospital can be as large or small as your plot needs — from a bustling urban trauma center to a more intimate community hospital.

Program Structure (Realistic for 1967–68)

Standard Diploma Program (3 years)

- Heavy clinical hours (1,800–2,200 hours)

- Rotations in:
 - Medical-surgical nursing
 - Pediatrics
 - Obstetrics
 - Psychiatry
 - Operating room
 - Emergency
 - Public health
- Classroom instruction in:
 - Anatomy & physiology
 - Microbiology
 - Pharmacology
 - Nutrition
 - Nursing theory & ethics
 - Pathophysiology

Advanced Standing / Accelerated Track (12–15 months)

Designed for students who already completed:

- Intro biology
- Chemistry
- Anatomy & physiology
- Psychology
- English composition
- Sociology

Your character, as a pre-nursing sophomore at the University of Minnesota, would likely have all of these.

This allows her to skip:

- Most first-year classroom courses
- Some early clinical fundamentals
- General education requirements

She still must complete:

- Core nursing theory
- All major clinical rotations
- Pharmacology
- State Board exam preparation

This makes a 12–14 month completion timeline believable.

Your Character's Training Timeline **(Spring 1967 → July 1968)**

Spring 1967

- She withdraws from the University of Minnesota.
- Applies to St. Brigid's accelerated diploma program.
- Admissions interview with:
 - A stern but fair Sister-administrator
 - A civilian RN instructor
- She is accepted for the **Summer 1967 accelerated cohort**.

Summer 1967 (June–August) — “Boot Camp Nursing”

Intensive 10–12 week crash course:

- Fundamentals of nursing
- Basic skills labs (bed baths, wound care, injections, sterile technique)
- Intro to pharmacology
- Hospital orientation
- First supervised patient care on medical wards

This is where she learns the emotional shock of real patient care.

Fall 1967 — Core Clinical Rotations Begin

She rotates through:

- **Medical-surgical nursing** (the backbone of all diploma programs)
- **Operating room** (scrubbing, instrument handling, assisting surgeons)
- **Emergency department** (fast-paced, chaotic, great for character development)

She begins to show aptitude for trauma care — a foreshadowing of Vietnam.

Winter 1967–68 — Advanced Coursework

- Pathophysiology
- Advanced pharmacology
- Psychiatric nursing rotation
- Night shifts (a rite of passage)

This is where she experiences:

- First patient death
- First code
- First moment of “I can do this”

Spring 1968 — Final Rotations

- Pediatrics
- Obstetrics
- Public health nursing
- Leadership/charge nurse training (common in diploma programs)

She also begins:

- Army Nurse Corps recruitment paperwork
- Physical exam and background checks
- Letters of recommendation from instructors

May 1968 — Graduation

She completes the accelerated diploma program.

June 1968 — RN Licensure Exam

The State Board exam (precursor to NCLEX) was offered only a few times per year. She takes it in early June and receives results within weeks.

Late June 1968 — Commissioning

Once she has her RN license:

- She is commissioned as a **Second Lieutenant** in the Army Nurse Corps.
- Attends a short orientation (not full basic training — nurses did not go through standard boot camp).
- Receives orders for Vietnam.

By July 1, 1968 — Arrival in Vietnam

She reports to:

- The 12th Evacuation Hospital
- The 95th Evacuation Hospital
- The 3rd Field Hospital in Saigon
- Or any other unit that fits your plot

Atmosphere & Culture of St. Brigid's (for storytelling)

The Sisters

- Strict curfews
- No men in dorms
- Mandatory chapel on Sundays
- Uniform inspections
- Compassion emphasized as a moral duty

The Students

- Mostly women aged 18–22
- Fierce camaraderie
- Gallows humor
- Exhaustion and pride in equal measure

The Hospital

- Long corridors with terrazzo floors
- The smell of antiseptic and cigarette smoke (yes, nurses smoked in break rooms)
- Surgeons who bark orders
- Nurses who run the place quietly but decisively