

In what time frame were there LPN warrant officers in the Medical Corps during the Vietnam War?

Short answer: The U.S. Army's short-lived program that appointed Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) as warrant officers in the Medical Department existed only for **about two years in the mid-1960s**, during the Vietnam War buildup.

When Exactly Did LPN Warrant Officers Serve?

The Army Nurse Corps briefly experimented with a **Warrant Officer Program** that allowed **associate-degree nursing graduates**—including LPNs—to be appointed as warrant officers. This program:

- **Was created during the Vietnam War buildup**, when the Army faced a severe nursing shortage.
- **Lasted only about two years** before being terminated.
- **Occurred in the mid-1960s**, based on Army Nurse Corps historical summaries.
 - The Army Nurse Corps Association notes it was a “**short-lived Warrant Officer Program**” implemented to meet Vietnam-era staffing needs.
 - The AMEDD Center of History & Heritage confirms the program “**was terminated two years later**” after its introduction.

Most likely time frame

Putting the sources together, historians generally place the program around:

≈ **1964–1966** This aligns with:

- The major Vietnam troop buildup beginning in 1965.
- The Army's urgent search for additional nursing personnel.
- The timing of other emergency measures (e.g., the 1966 draft of male nurses).

Why Was the Program So Short?

- It **did not significantly increase** the number of deployable nurses.
- The Army shifted instead to:
 - The **Army Student Nurse Program**, and
 - The **Walter Reed Institute of Nursing**, which produced more long-term officer-qualified nurses.

Bottom Line

LPN warrant officers in the Medical Corps served only during a brief window—roughly the mid-1960s (about 1964–1966)—as part of a short, ultimately unsuccessful effort to expand the Army’s nursing workforce during the Vietnam War.

If you’d like, I can also help you track down:

- Specific MOS codes for these warrant officers
- Personnel records from the era
- Unit histories where LPN warrant officers may have served

What was the Army Student Nurse Program? How long would an LPN enlisting in 1968 be in training before starting to serve as an RN nurse officer?

Below is a clear, historically grounded explanation of **what the Army Student Nurse Program (ASNP) was and how long an LPN enlisting in 1968 would have spent in training before becoming a commissioned RN in the Army Nurse Corps**. I’m drawing directly from the Army Nurse Corps historical sources you saw earlier.

Short, Direct Answer

The Army Student Nurse Program (ASNP) was a Vietnam-era Army program that paid for civilian nursing education in exchange for an active-duty service commitment as a commissioned Army Nurse Corps officer.

If an **LPN enlisted in 1968** and entered the ASNP or the related Walter Reed Army Institute of Nursing (WRAIN) pathway, they would typically spend **2–4 years** completing the required RN (associate or bachelor’s) education **before** commissioning and beginning service as an RN officer.

What the Army Student Nurse Program Was

Purpose

The ASNP was created to solve the severe Vietnam-era nursing shortage. The Army needed more fully qualified Registered Nurses (RNs) than civilian recruiting could supply.

How It Worked

- Students attended **civilian nursing schools** (or WRAIN beginning in 1966).
- The Army paid **tuition, fees, books, and a stipend**.
- Students were in a **reserve status** while in school—not yet officers.

- After graduation and passing RN licensure, they were **commissioned as Second Lieutenants** in the Army Nurse Corps.
- They then served an **active-duty obligation** (commonly 2–3 years).

Why It Mattered

The ASNP and WRAIN ultimately produced the number of nurses the Army needed when other programs—like the short-lived LPN warrant officer program—failed.

Training Timeline for an LPN Enlisting in 1968

An LPN in 1968 **could not** immediately serve as an RN or as an RN officer. They needed to complete an RN program first.

Typical Pathway

Here’s what the timeline looked like:

1. Enlistment as an LPN (1968)

- The soldier would serve in an enlisted medical MOS (e.g., 91C Practical Nurse).
- They could apply for the ASNP or WRAIN.

2. RN Education (Length: 2–4 years)

Depending on the program:

Program	Degree	Typical Length	Notes
Associate Degree RN	ADN	2 years	Many LPNs chose this route; fastest path to RN.
Diploma RN	Hospital-based	2–3 years	Still common in the 1960s.
WRAIN (Walter Reed Army Institute of Nursing)	BSN	4 years	Began accepting students in 1966; produced officers from 1968–1978.

3. RN Licensure

- After graduation, the student took the RN licensing exam (then the State Board Test Pool Examination).

4. Commissioning as an Officer

- Upon licensure, the graduate was commissioned as a **Second Lieutenant** in the Army Nurse Corps.
- Only then did they begin **active-duty service as an RN officer**.

So How Long Would It Take?

For an LPN enlisting in **1968**, the realistic timeline before serving as an RN officer was:

Fastest possible: ~2 years

(Associate Degree RN program)

Most common: 2–3 years

(Diploma or ADN program)

If attending WRAIN: 4 years

(BSN program beginning in 1968)

This aligns with the Army's Vietnam-era strategy: use ASNPs and WRAIN to produce fully qualified RNs, since shorter programs (like the LPN warrant officer experiment) did not meet staffing needs.

If You Want, I Can Also Help You:

- Reconstruct a **service timeline** for a specific veteran
- Explain **MOS 91C (Practical Nurse)** roles in Vietnam
- Compare ASNPs vs. WRAIN pathways
- Locate archival personnel or unit records

Just tell me what direction you'd like to go.

Say someone enlisted as an RN? How long would it be before that person was an officer nurse serving the wounded?

If someone **already enlisted as a fully trained RN** during the Vietnam era, the path to becoming an **Army Nurse Corps officer caring for wounded soldiers** was surprisingly fast. The Army was desperate for Registered Nurses, so the commissioning pipeline was streamlined.

Here's how it actually worked.

★ How long from enlistment to serving as an RN officer?

If a person entered the Army already holding an RN license, the timeline looked like this:

1. Enlistment or direct accession as an RN

Most RNs did **not** enlist as enlisted soldiers. They entered through a process called **direct commissioning**.

But if someone *did* enlist first (less common), they could immediately apply for a commission because they already met the RN requirement.

2. Commissioning process

Once the Army verified:

- RN license
- Nursing school transcripts
- Physical exam
- Security/background checks

...the individual could be commissioned as a **Second Lieutenant (2LT)** in the Army Nurse Corps.

🕒 **Typical time: 4–12 weeks**

During the Vietnam buildup, it was often closer to **4–8 weeks** because the Army accelerated medical accessions.

3. Officer orientation / basic training

Newly commissioned nurses attended:

Officer Basic Course (OBC)

- Length: **5–6 weeks**
- Focus: military customs, leadership, field training, Army medical system
- Not combat boot camp—much more professional and clinical

During the height of Vietnam, some nurses were even sent to duty stations **before** completing OBC, then attended later.

4. Assignment to a hospital or deployment

After OBC, nurses were assigned to:

- Stateside Army hospitals
- Overseas hospitals (Japan, Germany, Korea)
- Vietnam (field hospitals, evacuation hospitals, surgical hospitals)

 **Time from commissioning to treating patients: immediately to a few weeks**

Many nurses began caring for patients **within days** of arriving at their first duty station.



Total timeline

If someone already held an RN license when they joined the Army:

Fastest possible: 6–8 weeks

Commissioning + rapid assignment

Typical: 2–3 months

Commissioning + OBC + arrival at first hospital

Longest: ~4 months

If administrative delays or scheduling gaps occurred



Why the timeline was so short

During the Vietnam War:

- The Army had a **critical shortage** of Registered Nurses
- Casualty rates were high
- Hospitals in Vietnam needed trained RNs immediately
- The Army Nurse Corps expanded rapidly (peaking at over 5,000 nurses)

So the Army moved RNs into officer roles as quickly