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INSIGHT

National Guard and Military Response to Omicron and COVID-19

February 25, 2022

On November 26, 2021, the World Health Organization designated the Omicron mutation of the SARS-CoV-2 virus a "variant of concern." Since then, Omicron has become the dominant strain of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the United States. After a case surge from December 2021 through mid-January 2022, COVID-19 cases in the United States have dropped, with hospitalizations and deaths following the same trend after a short delay. The deployment of military and National Guard personnel remains an issue for Congress given the role they both played in responding to the Omicron COVID-19 surge and the role that they might play in the event of a future surge of a new variant.

Deployments of Military Personnel for Hospital Support

In response to the Omicron COVID-19 surge, the Biden Administration announced new deployments of military personnel. These deployments initially included six emergency response teams with more than 100 clinical personnel and paramedics to six states, but have since expanded. The U.S. Army North, U.S. Northern Command's Joint Force Land Component Command, manages the Department of Defense's COVID-19 response operation in support of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Department of Health and Human Services. **Figure 1** shows U.S. Army North's COVID-19 deployments for hospital support starting December 1, 2021.

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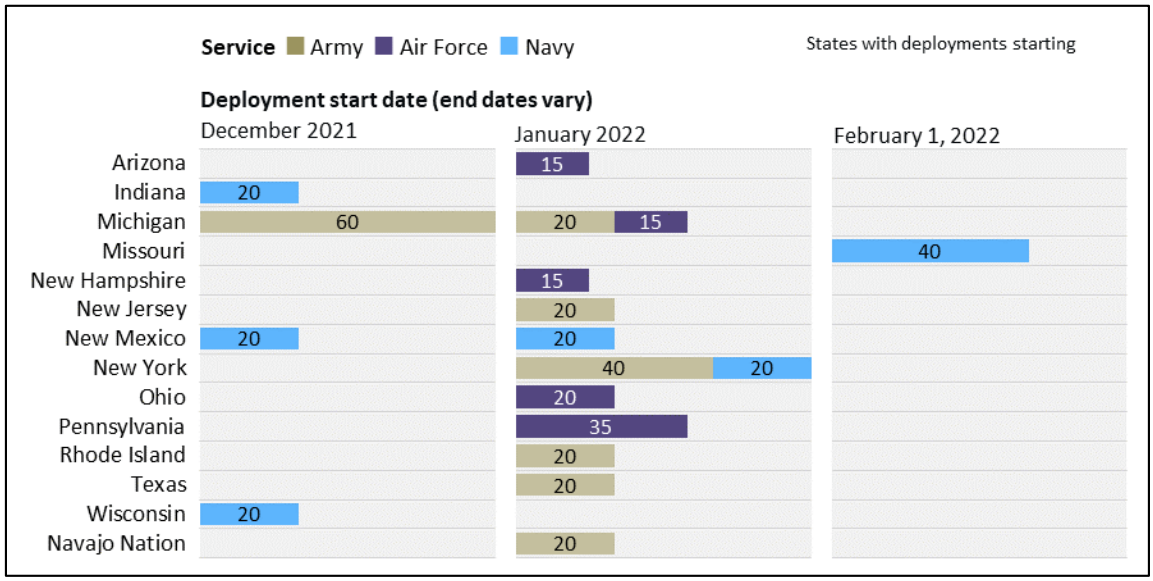
Figure 1. U.S. Army North COVID-19 Hospital Support

Deployments with Scheduled Start Dates from December 1, 2021, to February 1, 2022



Source: CRS using data from U.S. Army North (Fifth Army), "Fact Sheet: U.S. Army North COVID-19 Hospital Support Beginning August 2021," January 21, 2022.

Notes: Any possible ongoing deployments, in these or other states, have not been depicted. CRS cannot confirm whether they occurred as planned.

Deployments of the National Guard

On January 21, 2021, President Biden signed the "Memorandum to Extend Federal Support to Governors' Use of the National Guard to Respond to COVID-19 and to Increase Reimbursement and Other Assistance Provided to States." It approved 100% federal cost sharing for full-time National Guard duty; the funding status was later extended through April 1, 2022. For more information on National Guard funding as a response to the pandemic, see CRS In Focus IF11483, *The National Guard and the COVID-19 Pandemic Response*, by Alan Ott.

Table 1 and **Figure 2** provide the number of National Guard personnel by state from December 3, 2021, to January 28, 2022, activated in support of steady-state COVID-19 operations. According to the NGB, steady-state COVID-19 operations include "ongoing operations, security cooperation, and other shaping or preventive activities. It should include measurable and achievable objectives that contribute to the strategic end states."

Table 1. National Guard Personnel Activated by State to Support Steady-State COVID-19 Operations

(December 3, 2021, to January 28, 2022)

State	12/3/21	12/10/21	12/17/21	12/24/21	12/31/21	1/7/22	1/14/22	1/21/22	1/28/22
AK	19	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
AL	15	15	15	15	15	15	—	—	—
AR	7	7	7	7	7	24	78	82	82

State	12/3/21	12/10/21	12/17/21	12/24/21	12/31/21	1/7/22	1/14/22	1/21/22	1/28/22
AZ	491	491	491	491	491	491	35	35	35
CA	459	459	318	318	318	282	429	602	596
CO	98	99	109	109	109	266	266	300	291
CT	34	34	34	20	100	131	214	87	227
DC	—	—	—	—	90	—	90	88	88
DE	140	141	142	140	139	210	288	294	427
FL	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
GA	482	482	482	482	482	482	482	482	482
GU	206	206	206	206	206	206	125	125	184
HI	657	657	657	657	566	306	306	306	306
IA	—	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
ID	104	104	104	104	104	—	—	—	—
IL	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
IN	601	589	576	565	554	540	532	870	1,092
KS	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	79
KY	258	261	269	258	363	244	445	560	556
LA	834	834	837	839	833	849	916	973	973
MA	105	105	105	458	458	423	557	557	1,176
MD	123	123	129	133	133	143	147	1,486	811
ME	100	107	190	194	196	207	206	208	374
MI	152	152	152	152	152	152	152	152	152
MN	565	725	716	671	668	669	664	649	604
MO	53	60	63	63	63	38	38	38	38
MS	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
MT	111	75	107	105	105	105	105	105	105
NC	206	199	206	205	203	186	189	194	200
ND	73	73	68	67	64	59	58	55	57
NE	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
NH	22	19	104	101	107	104	177	177	246
NJ	186	396	400	400	396	436	648	662	673
NM	94	95	95	100	98	94	94	100	103
NV	130	130	130	130	125	130	130	92	142
NY	1,005	1,102	1,138	1,144	1,244	1,394	1,429	1,575	1,804
OH	82	81	81	918	1,210	2,499	2,425	2,366	2,446
OK	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	—	—

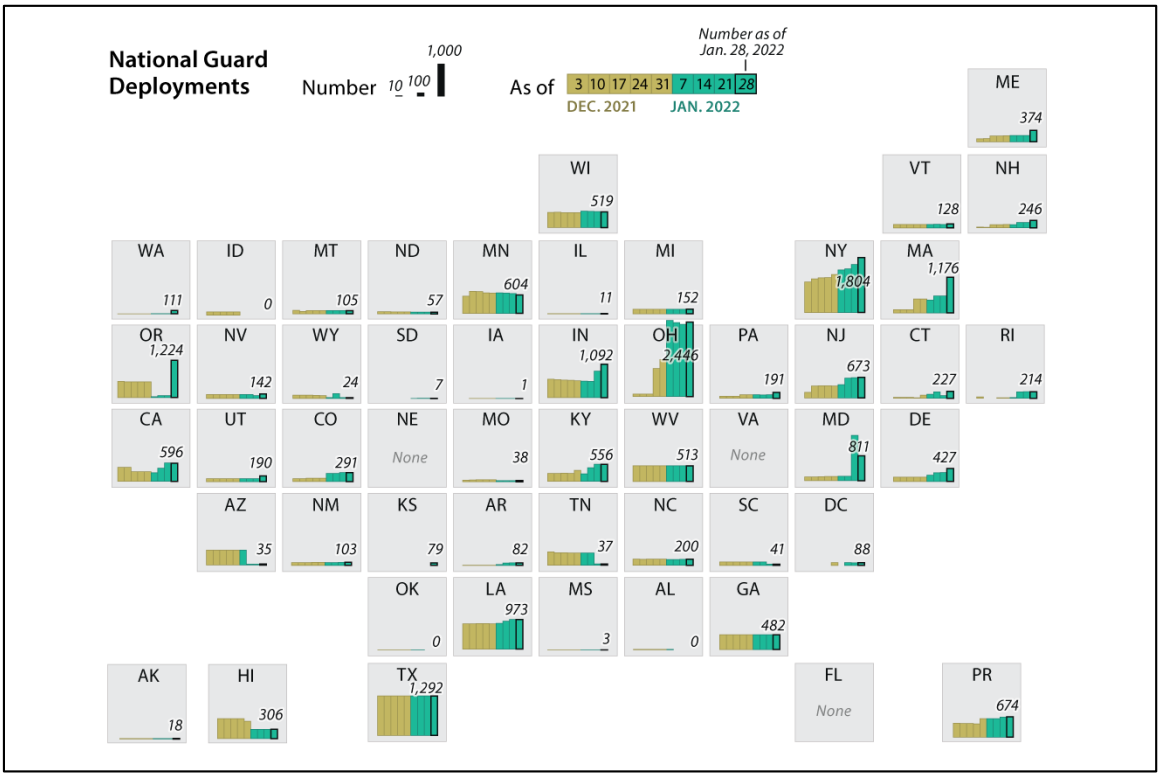
State	12/3/21	12/10/21	12/17/21	12/24/21	12/31/21	1/7/22	1/14/22	1/21/22	1/28/22
OR	526	517	514	514	514	29	64	64	1,224
PA	69	68	68	117	118	117	114	120	191
PR	459	453	454	439	613	609	613	658	674
RI	47	—	—	20	20	28	213	217	214
SC	111	111	111	111	111	111	111	41	41
SD	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	5	7
TN	433	403	408	398	398	398	398	37	37
TX	1,292	1,292	1,292	1,292	1,292	1,292	1,292	1,292	1,292
UT	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	190
VA	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
VI	116	116	113	109	108	109	109	109	109
VT	113	116	117	114	116	110	120	117	128
WA	2	2	2	2	2	5	5	5	111
WI	499	504	492	491	487	538	533	523	519
WV	513	513	513	513	513	513	513	513	513
WY	106	106	103	95	91	23	156	24	24
Grand Total	**11,812**	**12,155**	**12,251**	**13,400**	**14,115**	**14,700**	**15,604**	**17,073**	**19,656**

Source: National Guard Bureau, December 2021 – January 2022.

Notes: Each week's number gives a snapshot of the National Guard activated in that state or territory at that time. Includes DC and several U.S. territories. CRS cannot confirm the presence or absence of active National Guard in any territory not included.

Figure 2. National Guard Personnel Activated by State to Support Steady-State COVID-19 Operations

December 3, 2021, to January 28, 2022



Source: National Guard Bureau, December 2021 – January 2022.

Note: Data received on a weekly basis. Several territories not shown due to space constraints.

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