

✓ CF U.S. Armed Forces RP 8/24/90

Area reservists wait anxiously

As both U.S. and Iraqi forces edge toward a possible showdown, area reservists are sitting on the edge of their seats, waiting to see if they will be called on to take part in the Middle East conflict.

A U.S. Air Force reservist from Ben Lomond may be one of nearly 50,000 reserves the Pentagon could call into action.

"If they call me, I'll have to go — that's my job," said Brian Webber, 35. He has a 13-month-old baby and his wife doesn't like the idea of having her husband sent to the Middle East.

"My wife isn't very happy, but she knows what my job is about," he said.

Webber has worked for the California Department of Forestry for 16 years and is currently stationed at a lookout post in the Big Basin area. He prefers the scenic and pacific Santa Cruz Mountains to the steaming desert sands in Saudi Arabia.

"I love my job," he said. "I'd rather be here fighting fires."

Webber is a first lieutenant in the 66th MediVac Unit operating out of Travis Air Force Base in Vacaville. Although he has never been in battle in his seven years in the reserves, his unit

has training exercises every month.

Webber's unit transports wounded troops from field hospitals to military medical centers located away from battlefield areas.

If the Pentagon were to call on the Army reserves, it would activate certain support units, said Bob Mahoney, deputy chief of public affairs for the 6th Army at the Presidio in San Francisco. He said there are about 15,000 reserves in the greater San Francisco Bay Area.

Mahoney said orders would go through a chain of command, starting with U.S. Force Command in Georgia. The orders would then be sent to the 6th Army Command at the Presidio, who would then contact unit commanders in the area. They would call their units together at mobilization centers to make sure the troops had medical clearance and were fully equipped for duty.

When, or if, reserves get the word is anyone's guess, Mahoney said.

"I gave up trying to guess what Washington is going to do," he said. "You don't have to be here long to figure that out."

—Emilio Alvarado