Self-professed bomb target has long history of problems

By Matthew Brelis and Doris Sue Wong
GLOBE STAFF

Thomas A. Shay, who contends he was the intended target of a bomb that exploded in his father's Roslindale driveway and fatally wounded a Boston police officer, has a long psychiatric history and is deeply disturbed, according to neighbors, relatives and court records.

As police continued yesterday to probe his troubled background – which includes an arrest for prostitution – to determine if he could have made the bomb that killed Officer Jeremiah J. Hurley, Shay's sister said he was incapable of trying to harm his father, the person who discovered the bomb and called police.

But Paula Shay did say: "My brother has got problems. And he's had them for a long time.

"This is very tragic for my family," she said. "[illegible] to kill my father and he [Tommy] wouldn't do that, but he would say anything."

Thomas A. Shay turns 20 tomorrow. From at least the time he was 4, there have been strains on the family.

According to court records, Thomas L. Shay beat his wife Nancy from October 1975 into the winter of 1976. The beatings were so severe that police were called and Nancy Shay, a Brighton housewife, sought treatment at St. Elizabeth's Hospital, she alleged in court records. She said the beatings occurred in front of her two daughters from a previous marriage and the couple's three children, Nancy, Paula and Thomas.

Law enforcement sources say the younger Shay has a juvenile record, much of it in Milton, where he grew up after the family left Brighton. While the Milton incidents are "pretty minor stuff," according to a source, Shay has an outstanding default warrant in Boston Municipal Court for a common nightwalking charge, in July 1989.

He is currently being held at the Norfolk County Jail in Dedham in lieu of bail on a charge of violating probation from a 1989 conviction for receiving stolen goods.

Neighbors from Milton said the young Shay was withdrawn but very different.

"He used to kick the spokes out from the porch railing and I remember kids yelling once that Tommy had a knife and he was going to cut the cat's tail off," said one neighbor who requested anonymity.

"He came up to me with a cardboard box once and said, 'I know that you know what to do with this.' I looked in the box and there was a dead squirrel. He thought I could bring it back to life, and he seemed puzzled.

"It seemed like he was always in a fog."

Shay "has had serious psychiatric problems," according to Dr. Robert Weiner, a forensic psychiatrist hired by Aetna Insurance who examined Shay's father as part of a suit the elder Shay brought against a Dedham man.

The younger Shay "was hospitalized at the Gaebler Psychiatric Hospital for Children at age 5. He had also been treated at the Nazareth Home, Spaulding Center and the Baird Center," wrote Weiner.

Shay also spent time at Bridgewater State Hospital after he threatened to commit suicide when he was 17.

While at the state hospital, Shay made the statement that he had been "sexually abused beginning at the age of 9," according to a confidential psychiatric report. The report did not name an abuser.

According to a Department of Social Services spokeswoman, Shay was a client of DSS from at least 1980 until he turned 18 in 1989.

On Nov. 12, 1981 – nine days after Thomas A. Shay turned 10 – his mother filed for a temporary restraining

GLOBE STAFF PHOTO / TOM LANDERS

Thomas A. Shay arrives at Quincy District Court yesterday for a probation violation hearing.

It was a death knell for the 15-year-old marriage.

On Nov. 17, the elder Shay was told to vacate the Milton house. Living in Roslindale with his girlfriend, Mary Flanagan, he filed for divorce on May 19, 1988, seven months after getting custody of his son.

According to a spokeswoman for the Department of Youth Services, young Shay was detained for three months in 1988 and 1989 after failing to post bail on charges of receiving stolen property, but was never committed to the DYS following a conviction in juvenile court.

The younger Shay said at a press conference he called Thursday night that he owed Ralph Pace, a Stoughton accountant, $50,000 from two years ago and that the debt may have prompted the bombing.

Pace said he is not owed money by Shay, but that Shay stole his car and totalled it in 1989.

Shay has said that he works as a professional masseur at the Club Body Center in Rhode Island. But there is no such listing in any Rhode Island directory.

He also made claims that he worked as an EMT, volunteering for the Red Cross during the San Francisco earthquake. Red Cross officials in San Francisco have no record of a 17-year-old volunteer named Thomas A. Shay.

Sean McGettrick, 24, who said he knew Shay while both were children in Milton, said Shay liked to "pull stunts."

McGettrick said that, about five years ago, Shay told authorities at Wollaston Beach that he was swimming with a friend and that the friend suddenly disappeared in the water. McGettrick said the claim triggered a massive three-hour search involving Metropolitan Police, the Coast Guard and other authorities.

In the midst of the search, Shay informed authorities that his story was a hoax, McGettrick said.

McGettrick also recalled an occasion when he was about 14 years old and was riding his bike near the Blue Hills Parkway in Milton. He said he saw Shay get into an empty refrigerator box, pull the lid closed behind him and then begin rolling the box down the busy parkway.

"He just climbed in it, closed it up and he rolled it all the way down the street," McGettrick said. "I thought it was a little suicidal, or something."

According to court records, Shay has made at least two suicide threats. Despite the history, his attorney, William C. McPhee, says he is not a threat to anyone, including himself.

"He's not a danger to himself. He is not a danger to others," said McPhee. "He is not involved in that Roslindale situation and unfortunately he finds himself caught up in an investigation that he knows nothing about."

Produce

Wholesale prices at Boston Produce Market Friday

Eggs

Jumbo	wh 1.07 bm	1.17
Extra lge	wh 1.00 bm	1.08
Lge	wh .89 bm	1.06
Med	wh .76 bm	93
Pullets	wh .56 bm	58

Flour spring patent	9.35-9.55
Corn no 2 yellow	3.47
Oats 40 lbs	1.45
Potatoes 50 lbs	5.25-6.25
Choice exc fowl	.53-.66
Fancy hvy fowl	.08-.09
Broilers	.44-.56
Hen turkeys	.63-.70
Frozen tom turkeys 14-22 lbs	.60-.68
Frozen tom turkeys 22-up	.69-1.05
Froz. Bettsville turkeys	.74-.78

Money rates

Money rates for Friday, reported by Telerate Systems Inc.

Telerate interest rate index	4.989
Prime Rate	8.00
Discount Rate	5.00
Broker call loan rate	7.00-7.50

Federal funds market rate:
High 5 Low 4.875 Last 5

Dealer commercial paper

30-180 days	5.00-5.04

Commercial paper by finance company

30-270 days	4.96-4.95

Bankers acceptances dealer indications:

30 days	4.92
60 days	5.03
90 days	4.97
120 days	4.93
150 days	4.92
180 days	4.97

Certificates of Deposit Primary:

30 days	4.87
90 days	4.83
180 days	4.84

Certificates of Deposit by dealer:

30 days	5.05
60 days	5.15
90 days	5.10
120 days	5.10
150 days	5.10
180 days	5.10

Eurodollar rates:

Overnight	5-5 1/16
1 month	5-5 1/32
3 months	5 0625-5 1/8
6 months	5-5 1/32
1 year	5 1/8 75-5 3/32

London interbank offered rate:

3 months	5 1/32
6 months	5 0625

Treasury Bill auction results:
average discount rate

3-month as of Oct 28	4.99
6-month as of Oct 28	5.04

Treasury Bill, annualized rate on weekly average basis, yield adjusted for constant maturity, 1-year as of Oct 28 5.39

Treas. Bill market rate, 1-year	4.78-4.76
Treas. Bond market rate, 30-year	Fri 7.92

Fannie Mae 30 year mortgage commitments

30 days	8.53
60 days	8.59

Money market fund:
Merrill Lynch Ready Assets
30 day average yield 5.01
n.a. - not available

ock Exchange

TOTAL VOLUME ALL ISSUES 6,016,000 SHARES

	Sales	High	Low	Close	Chg
	20,400	4 1/8	4 1/8	4 1/8	+ 1/8
	5,800	9 1/8	9	9	- 1/8
	100	9	9	9	-1 1/8
	15,000	7/64	7/64	7/64	+ 3/32
	21,500	13/16	25/32	25/32	-1/32
	100	1 1/8	1 1/8	1 1/8	- 1/8
	1,000	5/16	5/16	5/16	+ 1/16
	1,000	1 15/16	1 15/16	1 15/16	+ 3/16
	28,600	1/8	1/8	1/8	- 1/8
	5,000	1/8	1/8	1/8	- 1/8
	1,000	8 1/8	8 1/8	8 1/8	-1 1/8
	2,500	22 1/2	22	22	-1 1/2
	1,000	1 1/8	1 1/8	1 1/8	- 1/8
	17,000	2 1/2	2 1/2	2 1/2	- 1/8
	1,000	2	2	2	
	100	1/8	1/8	1/8 1/8	

AmCap MuniBd M 5¢2 Oct 31 Nov 15
Nov 29