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GLOBE STAFF PHOTO / JOHN ILMACKI

Frank Foley, badly injured by a bomb in October, plays with granddaughter Erica Marrocco at home in West Roxbury.

*'I walked back up to Jerry to see . . . whether we should
suit up or X-ray the device. Then it went off.'*

FRANK FOLEY, Boston bomb squad officer

Suffering a survivor's torment

By John Ellement
GLOBE STAFF

A white patch covers the part of his face where Frank Foley's left eye once was. A bandage is wrapped around his right forearm, and small pieces of metal are working their way out from under the skin of his right hand. "Physically, I'm fine," said the Boston police officer who sur-

Squad partner, Officer Jeremiah J. Hurley Jr. "I lost an eye, but I could have lost my hand. I could have lost my legs. I could have lost both eyes. I'm left relatively unscathed, a few scars."

But when the seven-year member of the Bomb Squad talks about the emotions that have overwhelmed him since the afternoon of Oct. 28 when his life was changed forever and his friend killed, Foley reveals scars that will take far longer to heal. Foley is tormented for having survived a killer's hand.

Suffering a survivor's torment

■ FOLEY

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"The healthier I get, the more I think and the more questions I have and the more difficult it is each day to get to sleep," Foley said in his first interview since Hurley was fatally wounded as they examined the suspicious box in the rear driveway of 39 Eastbourne Road in Roslindale.

"I just don't understand why I was close as I was and then I was able to survive, and survive the way I did," he said. "I wonder, maybe there is more that I have to suffer in this life. I hope not. Or maybe I just can do some good in this life."

"I don't know why God took Jerry and spared me," he said.

Foley and Hurley were responding to a report by Thomas L. Shay, who told police he first noticed the device Sunday night when he drove into the driveway. Shay said he moved the device to the rear of the driveway, but the next day he became suspicious and went to the police station to report it.

Hurley and Foley were dispatched to check it out.

Shay was at first considered the target, but his son, Thomas A. Shay, told reporters that police were trying to determine if his father, the elder Shay, could have made the bomb.

In subsequent days, the younger Shay became a suspect after saying he, and not his father, was the target and admitted to making a bomb threat on Nov. 13, 1990, claiming that a bomb was about to explode at the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's Back Bay Station.

Neither has been charged and police continue to investigate.

Foley said he has not read newspaper accounts or watched any television news reports about the bombing because he does not want to subject himself and Hurley to second guessing.

"Jerry was a very cautious type and I think they will say the same thing about me," Foley said. "We didn't take any chances with anything. We weren't that type. . . . This happened, and I don't think there was really anything that could've been done differently. . . . There isn't a thing I feel was wrong."

Foley, who graduated in 1987 from an FBI bomb disposal training school in Alabama, joined the squad seven years ago after member Randy LaMattina was injured by an explosion.

For Hurley and Foley, Oct. 28 began like many others. It was quiet and the two were finishing their lunch at Bomb Squad headquarters in Roxbury when the call came in.

The call was nothing special, Fo-

ley said. "We didn't get alarmed. I knew there were a couple of cruisers from Area E already at the scene and that there was something there, so we just went to the call."

Thomas L. Shay, who lives on Eastbourne Road with his fiancée, Mary A. Flanagan, told police he found the device attached to the bottom of his car Sunday night. The device now lay in the rear of the driveway on the right side of the white, Cape house where Flanagan's family had lived for years.

Standing around the device as Foley and Hurley arrived were some police officers and Shay. "There were people up there when we walked up who were standing there, showing it to us," Foley said. "I moved the people from there and started questioning them, taking information down."

Hurley remained near the device. "At that point, I walked back up to Jerry to see what he thought we should do from there, whether we should suit up or X-ray the device," Foley said.

"Then it went off."

Foley then found himself lying on the ground and he pressed his hand against his left eye to stem the flow of blood.

"I knew I was hurt pretty bad. I thought if I passed out that I was going to die," he said. "If my arm fell down I was afraid that it was going

to happen, you know, that part of my face was going to fall away. My arm got so tired. I didn't think I could hold it up any longer. . . . It was pretty terrifying."

Foley said Officer Denise Kraft came to his aid, placing a towel on his face while Sgt. Thomas Creavin helped Hurley. Other officers directed Health and Hospitals emergency medical crews into the neighborhood.

"I had propped myself up," Foley said. "I was sitting up and I was looking at Jerry and I could hear them on the radios trying to get us help. I just knew that I couldn't pass out; that I had to stay awake and if I passed out, that I wouldn't wake up."

Foley said he heard Hurley asking for him. "Jerry's big concern was asking for me. I was laying there, conscious through the whole thing, and I knew Jerry was asking, 'How's Frank?'"

Neither Foley nor Hurley had donned bomb suits, designed and built by the Army, which protect officers in an explosion.

"We weren't wearing them," he said. "It was just our initial approach to the device, the way we normally do, the way we've been trained to do. Initially you go up on it and you make a determination of what you think. . . . If we had determined it was something, from that point it would have been just him going up with that suit on," said Foley, referring to Hurley.

"But it didn't get to that stage," Foley said. "It went off. . . ."

The oldest of Foley's four children, Lauren Marrocco, returned home Oct. 28 to see several police cars lining the street in front of the house. Once inside, she was told her father had been hurt, but that no one knew for sure if he was alive, or if he would live.

Hysterical, Marrocco called her husband and told him to meet her at Brigham and Women's Hospital, that something had happened to her father. When she arrived, she said, "I was screaming for my father. I just had to touch him, and see him and kiss him and tell him I loved him, in case he died."

Within hours, Foley's three daughters and son had gathered at the hospital, as had Claire Foley from whom he is divorced, but who has remained his "best friend" through the years.

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Hours passed before the first comforting words reached their ears. Marrocco said a nurse told them: "Your dad said that he loves you, that he is thinking of you, and that he is not as vain as he used to be."

Marrocco said the family, which had been teasing Frank Foley about a recently begun health kick, "started laughing. We knew it was coming from our Dad and it wasn't coming from a nurse who was trying to reassure us."

At the same time, the Foley family was struggling to restrain their joy because of the sadness that collapsed around the Hurley family at 7:22 p.m. that day when Jeremiah J. Hurley Jr., a police officer, a devoted husband and father, died.

A funeral Mass was held Nov. 1 at St. Anne's Church in the Readville section of Hyde Park. Hurley is buried at Fairview Cemetery.

Francis X. Foley Jr., 18 years old and Foley's youngest child, stood in for his father at Hurley's funeral, helping other members of the Bomb Squad bear the casket of one of their own.

"He was a good man, a good guy; not an aggressive bone in his body," the senior Foley said quietly of his friend. "Jerry was a good guy to me. He was a wonderful family man."

During his 16-day stay at Brigham and Women's, Foley received more than 200 cards and letters, most from people he did not know but who felt compelled to reach out to a stranger facing a life or death crisis in a hospital room.

He got a letter from President Bush, who told Foley that he and his wife, Barbara, would remember Foley and his family in their prayers. Foley is honored to have received a missive from the president, but there were more precious things sent to him: written words that may frame the rest of his life.

"It was just amazing the letters I got," Foley said, as tears fell slowly from his right eye. "There were so many wonderful people out there, people who have less than I have and who stop and take the time to write me, to encourage me."

Foley said he also was helped by police officers. Two cops who had been injured in the line of duty - one from Colorado and one from Indianapolis - visited to show him that he can recover. The Indianapolis cop

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the right path.

But even that action by the Boston Police Patrolmen's Association failed to give detectives a glimmer of hope. Only a handful of telephone calls were received.

Foley agreed to an interview last week because he wanted to remind the public that a fellow police officer, his partner and a friend, was slain and that authorities need the public's help in catching a killer who could

Officer cites family support, faith in God

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brought before and after pictures of the injuries he suffered in a bomb explosion, Foley said.

Then there was the Boston cop guarding Foley; he and Foley talked through the night. When Foley awoke, he said he found a small statue of Jesus' hands, in prayer, beside his bed.

"You usually picture a cop coming in with a case of Budweiser for you or something," he said. "But there are an awful lot of guys coming in with words of encouragement. All these things made me stronger by seeing that."

Foley said he has also been strengthened by a renewed faith in God, one that has helped him survive the bombing. He also believes God helped him to stop the off-hours drinking nearly three years ago that had affected his personal life, and God helped him stop smoking eight months ago.

"I honestly came to believe that maybe God helped me through these things so I could take this punch when I got hit," he said. "If I had been my old self, I don't know if physically I could have taken it. Emotionally, I think I would have been here just feeling sorry for myself and saying, 'Why did this happen to me?' But I don't feel that way."

Foley's family surrounds him in his convalescence now, offering sometimes conflicting ways of dealing with his physical and emotional pain. And he is visited regularly by his three granddaughters, whom he treasures and who treasure him.

"I don't know why I lived," Foley said. "I think there was something up there, helping me."