



Herald photo

CELEBRATED CASE: Boston Police Detective Mike Craven, right, escorts bombing suspect Thomas Shay through Logan Airport after helping to arrest him in San Francisco in 1992.

Colleagues, friends plan tribute to cop who goes the extra mile

By RALPH RANALLI

Talk of police officers "giving their all" to the job is so common it's become a cliché — long hours, danger, stress and health problems seem to be issued with the gun and the badge.

What sets Boston Police Detective Brendan "Mike" Craven apart, his friends say, is that he gave more.

When his friend Jeremiah Hurley was killed and academy classmate Francis X. Foley was severely injured by a bomb in Roslindale in 1991, Craven threw himself into the

hunt for the bombers.

Thirteen months, hundreds of interviews and stakeouts, unpleen cups of coffee and 10,000 or so cigarettes later, Craven suffered a serious stroke.

A few days later in the hospital he suffered another one. "It looked really bad for him, like maybe he wouldn't make it," a friend in law enforcement said yesterday.

But tonight his friends will gather for a "tribute" to the 49-year-old Craven at the McKeon Post in Dorchester to celebrate his remarkable comeback and successful investigation into the bombing.

Thomas A. Shay, 21, was convicted in July based in part on evidence gathered by Craven. Closing arguments in the trial of Alfred Trenkler, 37, of Milton are scheduled for Monday.

Police Commissioner William Bratton said everyone in the department appreciates that Craven pushed himself past his limit to help a fallen cop.

"They got indictments," Bratton said. "Definitely the investigation would have to be deemed a success."

The Hyde Park native spent three weeks receiving impatient therapy after his strokes in early February 1992. Since then it's been more therapy three days a week to repair his speech, balance and motor function.

"I thought I was philosophical before, but I learned a lot being laid up," Craven said. "Like the hours and just going and going and going, maybe

you need to embrace your family. Whether you're Jeremiah Hurley or Frank Foley or myself when you're over, you're over."

That means spending time with wife Diane and revelling in his son Brendan's making the honor roll in junior high, he said.

But those long hours on the job earned him the respect of fellow cops, federal prosecutors and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Agents he worked with on the bombing probe as a classic street-smart Boston detective.

Nearly everyone has a Craven story. Like the one where a reluctant grand jury witness hid a potentially useful tape somewhere in the huge 20-story federal courthouse building.

"He found it on top of a power box near a pay telephone," said Assistant U.S. Attorney Paul Kelly. "It took him about seven minutes."

With partner Detective Sgt. Frank Armstrong, it took less than two days for Craven, working around the clock, to find Shay in San Francisco's huge gay community.

"Exceptionally good at what he does, when he got on something he was like a bloodhound, he would never let go," said ATF agent Jeff Kerr.

Now, Craven said his goal is to get back to work, which Bratton said is a possibility if doctors permit it. "I'm taking it one day at a time, but ultimately I'd like to go back," he said. "That's what I am, I'm a cop."