

Trenkler is convicted in fatal bombing

By Matthew Brellis
GLOBE STAFF

Alfred W. Trenkler, a Milton native who was educated at exclusive private schools, was found guilty by a federal jury yesterday of manufacturing the bomb that killed Boston Police Officer Jeremiah J. Hurley Jr. and maimed Officer Francis X. Foley.

Foley, seated in the front row of US District Judge Rya W. Zobel's courtroom, embraced family members and law enforcement officials as Trenkler's mother sat sobbing across the aisle.

Trenkler, 37, was portrayed by assistant US attorneys Paul V. Kelly and Frank A. Libby Jr. as a cold, calculating engineer who

built a remote control bomb that was powered with two or three sticks of dynamite for his lover, Thomas A. Shay. Shay, 21, was convicted last summer.

"My feelings were a lot more adamant about Trenkler," Foley said. "He was the one who was and is capable of making this device. He's the one I'd be afraid of. There was a lot in Shay's background to contribute to what he did, but Trenkler's motivation was completely different."

Trenkler, who attended the Park School, Milton Academy and Thayer Academy and Wentworth Institute, was portrayed at the month-long trial as a skilled electrical engineer who in 1986 used his knowledge to

build a remote control bomb that exploded in Quincy.

Kelly and Libby used that 1986 bombing to link Trenkler to the 1991 bomb that exploded in the Roslindale driveway of Thomas L. Shay's home, killing Hurley.

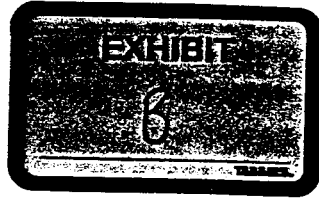
In both cases, Trenkler built the bomb for someone else and had a person purchase parts for the bomb at a Radio Shack. The bombs themselves were similar — remote control, battery powered and attached to the undercarriage of vehicles with round magnets.

Shay, who had spent much of his youth in state care, wanted to kill his father to get money and to take revenge for a childhood

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FRANCIS X. FOLEY
Officer wounded in blast



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of abuse and neglect, prosecutors said. They alleged Trenkler built the bomb to maintain his relationship with Shay and to get money for his failing telecommunications business.

The elder Shay testified that a black box with magnets detached from his car when he parked it in his Roslindale driveway on Oct. 27, 1991. He said he moved the box twice and went to police the following day. On Oct. 28, 1991, Hurley and Foley, both bomb squad officers, were examining the black wooden box when it exploded.

There was no physical evidence tying Trenkler to the Roslindale bomb, and, unlike in the Shay trial, the government did not have numerous admissions from the defendant that he participated in the bombing.

"There is no question that this was a much more difficult case," said Kelly.

An important prosecution witness was David Lindholm, a convicted marijuana dealer who in December 1992 spent a weekend in the Plymouth County Jail with Trenkler, who was detained for eight months after his Dec. 16, 1992, indictment. Lindholm testified that Trenkler admitted making the 1991 bomb and then coldly blamed Hurley for his own death.

"It was all circumstantial evidence and very hard to come to a decision," said one juror, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "We took many votes." The juror said the evidence about the 1986 bombing was "very decisive in the jury's finding." The juror said some members found Lindholm's testimony to be very important while others did not.

Trenkler was convicted of conspiring with Shay to build the bomb, receiving explosives in interstate commerce and attempted malicious destruction of property used in interstate commerce. Because Hurley was killed, the maximum penalty Trenkler could face is mandatory life in prison without parole.

After the verdict, Zobel granted the government motion to revoke Trenkler's house arrest, and he was placed in the custody of the US marshal. His sentencing is scheduled for Feb. 15.

As deputy marshals handcuffed him, Trenkler hugged and kissed his mother, a former professional figure skater who works as a real estate broker.

US Attorney Donald K. Stern praised Kelly and Libby and the cooperative investigation conducted by Boston police and the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

Trenkler did not take the stand, and his attorney, Terry Segal, could not be reached for comment.