Once-tried fatal bomb suspect seen making deal

By RALPH RANALLI

Accused Roslindale bomber Thomas Shay, whose 1993 conviction was overturned by a federal appeals court, is expected to plead guilty today in a deal worked out with federal prosecutors, officials said yesterday.

The deal is expected to shave several years off Shay's 15-year sentence, but will spare the families of his victims the anguish of a re-trial, sources said. A Boston police bomb squad officer was killed and another was seriously wounded trying to examine Shay's bomb.

The First Circuit Court of Appeals ruled last year that a federal judge erred during Shay's trial by not allowing the jury to hear testimony from a defense psychiatric expert.

The defense psychiatrist would have testified that Shay — who was convicted at least in part because of his own statements — suffered from a compulsion to make up grandiose lies and stories.

Assistant U.S. Attorney David Apfel, who is prosecuting the case, confirmed the 26-year-old Shay has a 2:30 p.m. change-of-plea hearing scheduled today in front of U.S. District Court Judge Edward F. Harrington.

Yesterday marked the seventh anniversary of the bombing, which claimed the life of Boston police officer Jeremiah Hurley and injured officer Francis X. Foley.

Federal prosecutors said Shay and his lover, Alfred Trenkler, were trying to blow up Shay's father but the bomb fell from underneath the elder Shay's car.

Trenkler was convicted in a separate federal trial and is serving a life sentence.