

AVIATION **security** *international*

The Journal of Airport & Airline Security

JUNE 2001 : Volume 7 Issue 3

• GRL781

• LV224



Hobart, Tasmania *quarantining the threat*

• RK595

Stowaways:
a journey in a wheel bay

Sex, Health, Religion & VIPs:
problems in passenger screening

Active Terrorist Groups:
armed and dangerous

Training The Security Trainer:
the importance of best practice



Tasmanian Quarantine

by Philip Baum



At first glance the tranquil Australian island state of Tasmania looks about as far away from the horrors of the modern world as one could imagine. Even the mention of concepts such as international terrorism, organised crime and ethnic cleansing in such an environment seems inappropriate.

One feels cleansed almost as soon as one lands in Hobart. A quarantine officer from the Australian Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, often a lady by the name of Kate Brown, is there to meet passengers and ensure that all fresh food products are disposed of in the bins provided. Bear in mind that almost all flights landing in Hobart are domestic, so the controls are intended to protect the island from mainland (although Tasmanians refer to it as North Island!) pests and diseases. Furthermore, dogs entering the island must be treated for hydatid tapeworms, a parasite the authorities have almost completely eradicated

from Tasmania since the 1970s. In the baggage reclaim, dogs are on hand to sniff out undeclared plants, fruit, meat and vegetables.

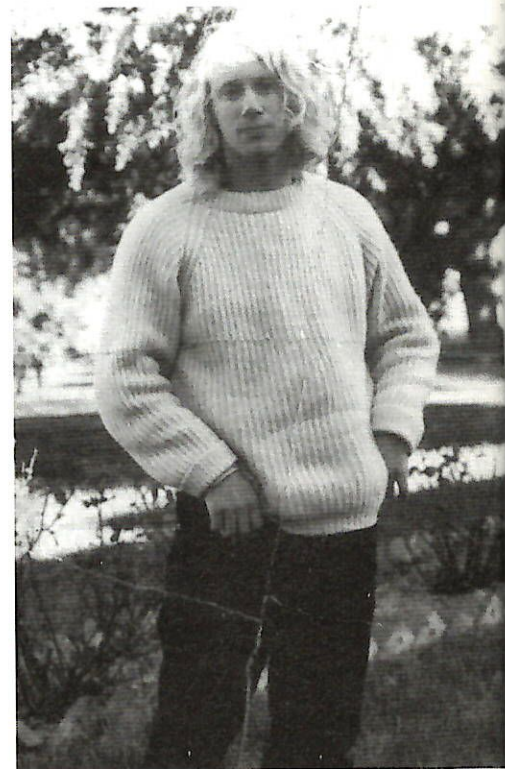
Direct contact with foreign lands is limited. Although the airport is technically "international", the international terminal itself is only opened for five flights per year, currently operated by Singapore Airlines. Domestic Tasmanian flights, operated by Tasair, use the nearby Cambridge Airport. All in all, even though the Department of Transport does provide security training and conduct table-top exercises on the island every two years, and despite the presence of the Tasmanian Police and a contract security company by the name of Power Aviation Proprietary Limited, security is not an issue one worries about when visiting. The only guns in sight are the .22s and shotguns that the Senior Operations Managers use for bird control.

It might, then, seem perfectly reasonable for a Tasmanian to come up with one of the statements I have heard all too frequently from representatives of airlines and airports, especially the smaller ones, around the world. "Hijackings don't affect us", or "We're not really a target", or "Terrorists don't target aviation any more". The only thing is, you don't hear comments like that in Hobart. At least not since 28th April 1996.

Tasmanians are proud of their heritage. They even joke about their "forebears being chosen by England's best judges". Humour, however, masks a sad chapter in British penal history. Convicts were transported to Australia for crimes as minor as stealing a loaf of bread. Those who com-

mitted second offences were often sent to the penal colony of Port Arthur, located on a peninsular south east of Hobart. Today Port Arthur is an historic site and Tasmania's premier tourist attraction.

On a summer's day the ruins seem almost beautiful and it is difficult to envisage the horrors that the site had witnessed in former years. The still waters, green lawns and blue skies are a visual paradise. But for those who wore the ball and chain, those who were whipped and those who died of malnutrition or insanity, the sumptuous beauty must have felt more like a cruel joke. Today, visitors come from around the globe to learn of the sufferings, the agony, the anguish, the torture and



Martin Bryant massacred 35 people at Port Arthur on Sunday 28th April 1996





Hobart Airport, Tasmania, became a focal point in the aftermath of the Port Arthur tragedy

the tales of woe. Those who visited on April 28th 1996 were to get an all too realistic experience.

Martin Bryant also visited Port Arthur that day. By the time he had left, 35 people were dead. Many others were scarred, either mentally, physically, or both, for the rest of their lives. Bryant had killed people as they walked around the site, ate in the Broad Arrow Café, visited the gift shop, or ran for their cars. It was the worst massacre by a lone gunman in modern history. And it took place in Tasmania.

From a personal perspective, I could not help be moved by both the historic importance of the site and the more recent tragedy. I stood at the former Broad Arrow Café, the place that has come to symbolise Bryant's actions, and I contemplated the connection between Port Arthur and the world of aviation.

Those instructors and management personnel of airlines and airports who convince themselves that their operations are not targets should visit Port Arthur. Security is not the same as counter-terrorism. Security means the protection of lives and assets from all manner of threats, be they terrorist, criminal, natural, or the actions, as in the case of Martin Bryant, of a psychologically disturbed individual.

Whilst terrorists may be associated with events in specific locations around our planet, there are, regrettably, such crazed individuals world-wide. In the major cities of London, New York and Tokyo, in the hot spots of Jerusalem, Bogota and Karachi, and in the remote, tranquil, off-the-beat-

en-track, villages and outposts from the Arctic to Antarctica.

Complacency is not an option. Bryant's actions did not only affect those who witnessed them. Nearly all the families on the

"Security is not the same as counter-terrorism. Security means the protection of lives and assets from all manner of threats..."

Tasman Peninsula lost a relation or friend. The entire State and Australian nation grieved and continue to grieve.

From an airport perspective, employees at Hobart International will also never forget Martin Bryant. As the news spread of the massacre, many visitors to Tasmania, some of whom had been at Port Arthur, headed for the airport to leave the island. Meanwhile relatives and friends from other Australian states and overseas headed to Tasmania to support survivors. The world's international press corps descended on the island too... Hobart International was the natural gateway. Airport personnel had to deal with distressed and anguished passengers, news thirsty journalists, task forces of police and governmental representatives and support counsellors, whilst continuing to operate an airport that had become, along with the hospital in Hobart, a focal point for the provision of information and reuniting of individuals separated by the mayhem.

Martin Bryant was sentenced to impris-

onment for the term of his natural life on each of the 35 counts of murder. On each of the remaining counts he was sentenced to imprisonment for 21 years to be served concurrently. Mr Justice Cox ordered that he should not be eligible for parole in respect of any such sentence.

So Bryant is in quarantine. Tasmania has purged itself of another disease. But Tasmanians will not take security for granted, and nor should anybody else.

Kate Brown knows that it only takes one tiny tapeworm to infect Tasmania's sheep, or one pest to destroy crops.

Our Tasmanian lesson should be that security means protection at all times and at all locations. No airline, no airport, is not a target. No airline, no airport, can claim immunity. All types of threat must be quarantined. Just ask the people of the Tasman Peninsula. ☺



In memory of those who died; opposite the Broad Arrow Café at Port Arthur