

THE DAILY NEWS, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2001



CONSTANT VIGIL A U.S. marshal surveys scene of American Airlines terminal at Kennedy Airport yesterday. Security at airports has been beefed up in aftermath of terrorist attacks.

Tightened airport security is shape of things to come

By SHERRYL CONNELLY
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

Heightened security meant longer airport check-in times yesterday, as U.S. marshals joined beefed-up security forces at area airports.

But some passengers reported it was more time-consuming elsewhere. Lynn Jones of Rohnert Park, Calif., who flew from San Francisco to Newark, said, "There were a lot more police in the airport there."

Airline security was a big focus in Washington yesterday as Congress debated requiring secure cockpits with bullet-proof doors and an increase in armed guards in airports and on planes.

A bill being drafted by Sens. Ernest Hollings (D-S.C.), John McCain (R-Ariz.), and John Kerry (D-Mass.) is expected to be introduced after tomorrow's Commerce Committee hearing on airport security.

At the nation's airports, passengers took quick notice of immediate changes: the elimination of curbside check-in, the need to present tickets and picture identification twice and the thorough rummaging of carry-on bags. Many took it in stride — and were grateful.

"I'm glad for it. I don't mind at all. This is our life," Joseph LoMonaco of Brooklyn said yesterday at Kennedy Airport, having returned from Italy with his wife, Phyllis.

Accepts added security

Ed McQuillan of the Rockaways in Queens, who came in on the same flight as the LoMonacos, took the precaution of leaving his razor and aerosol cans behind. "The security doesn't bother me at all. If they continue to do this, it will be accepted and no one will notice."

Although many planes were in the air yesterday, many would-be travelers stayed on

the ground. Several passengers arriving in Newark reported yesterday that their flights were only a third to half-full.

The Port Authority reported air traffic at the three major area airports was running at about 50% of normal capacity.

Amid the new emphasis on security, some passengers had items confiscated. Mary Hill of Queens, flying in from Fort Lauderdale, lost her scissors and bug spray. "They went through our bags and kept them," she said.

But perhaps the most dramatic difference for some, and the most forceful reminder of the need for increased security, was what was missing.

As Kevin Sullivan, arriving from San Francisco after vacationing in Hawaii with his wife, Betsy, and three children, put it, "It's very difficult to fly into New York and not see the World Trade Center. That was disturbing."

CITY_21MC100_011829632