

# That's Not a Knife

By Reg P. Wydeven  
March 13, 2013

For my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, our close family friends got me a Swiss Army Knife. I thought it was the coolest gift ever, and I still cherish it. The knife is equipped with a corkscrew, toothpick, tweezers, scissors, bottle opener and screwdriver. I'm just glad that I've never been stuck in a survival crisis where I needed to rely on it.

In the late 1880s, the Swiss Army first provided its soldiers with the now-famous folding pocket knife. This knife had all of the cool features so the soldiers could use them to open canned food and disassemble and reassemble the Swiss service rifle, which contained screws.

The most famous wielder of the Swiss Army Knife was MacGyver, the resourceful TV character who could make a nuclear bomb out of bubble gum and a toothpick. Portrayed by Richard Dean Anderson, MacGyver used his knowledge of chemistry, physics, technology, and nature to get out of no-win situations. MacGyver hated guns, so he only armed himself with duct tape and his Swiss Army Knife, which he used for science and never violence.

Not everyone is a pacifist like MacGyver, however, which is why many people are opposed to the Transportation Security Administration's new policy.

On April 25, the TSA will once again allow small knives to be carried on planes by passengers. The policy provides that pocketknives that don't lock with blades 2.35 inches or shorter, in addition to sports equipment like golf clubs, ski poles and hockey and lacrosse sticks, will be allowed into aircraft cabins as carry-on baggage.

The banning of pocketknives came about as a result of the September 11 terrorist attacks. The TSA released a statement about the new policy, saying, "This change allows transportation security officers to better focus their efforts on finding higher-threat items such as explosives."

The Association of Flight Attendants vehemently opposes the new policy, calling it "outrageous" and claiming it "cannot stand." The AFA feels that allowing pocketknives on planes puts both flight attendants and passengers at risk. With increased numbers of passengers, reduced airline staff, and more delays, tempers can flare. Flight attendants fear arming frustrated passengers is a bad idea.

Surprisingly, the Air Line Pilots Association supports the new TSA policy. The ALPA also released a statement that read, "ALPA supports TSA efforts to streamline security and shift focus to individuals who intend to do harm. This will standardize TSA policy with the international community." Also fearing explosives, the pilots feel the new policy will free up TSA "resources for screening so that they focus on the real security threats instead of objects."

If a bomb would somehow be snuck onto a plane, however, maybe allowing pocketknives would give some amateur MacGyver a fighting chance of disarming it.