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# LAX checkpoint nets weapons hoard

By Art Marroquin, Staff Writer  
Posted: 01/09/2009 10:47:22 PM PST

More than a dozen weapons and a cache of ammunition were found Friday morning in the truck of a man driving through a security checkpoint at Los Angeles International Airport.

Airport police officers discovered the firearms stashed in the rear bed of a Chevrolet Silverado 4x4 during a random inspection at 11 a.m. near Century and Sepulveda boulevards, according to Sgt. Jim Holcomb, a spokesman for the Airport Police Department.

Included in the find were 10 handguns, five rifles, an antique musket and nearly 1,000 rounds of ammunition, Holcomb said. One handgun and the musket were loaded, he said.

The motorist, identified as Phillip Joseph Dominguez, 47, of Orange, faces a felony charge of transporting an assault weapon, Holcomb said.

Dominguez told authorities that he was at the airport to pick up someone, but officials are still investigating why the weapons were hidden in the pickup truck.

He remained in custody as the FBI, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Los Angeles Police Department investigated the matter.

"It's infrequent when our officers find such a large number of firearms coming into the airport, and we're taking this very seriously," Holcomb said. "We are still looking into whether all the guns were registered in his name."

Airport police initially said 37 guns were found in the truck, but that estimate was based on the number of boxes found in the cab, which did

not all contain weapons, according to LAX spokeswoman Nancy Castles.

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Holcomb said Dominguez's pickup truck was randomly searched with help from a computer program that LAX

police officers began testing more than a year ago. The program uses a series of algorithms that make it difficult to detect any patterns or irregularities in how vehicles are selected for searches.

"It was a random selection that most people are subjected to when they enter the airport," Holcomb said. "This time, the computer did its job."

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