

INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGIES FOR COMMERCIAL AND PRIVATE AVIATION

An Interview with Steve Karoly of K2 Security Screening Group

By Annamarie Buonocore

This month, *In Flight USA* is excited to share some insight from K2 Security Screening Group, a technology integration company that manages airport security systems projects. While many people automatically assume that

security is a necessity for only large airports and commercial airlines, new technologies are much needed in the private sector as well. In this interview, Steve Karoly talks about his years of experience as a systems engineer and how this applies to the world of aviation, big and small.

In Flight USA: Tell me a little bit

about K2 Security Screening Group. What do you do there?

K2 Security Screening Group: Sure. I'll start with the parent company, if you will, which is K2 Construction Consultants. K2 Construction Consultants has been in business for 30 years, and what they're really focused on is project management, project controls, project and systems integration, deployment, and implementation of security equipment. The division that I work with and, that we want to talk about primarily is K2 Security Screening Group.

IF USA: What does K2 Security Screening Group do?

K2: We plan, manage, and install security screening systems in airports, primarily at security checkpoints or in the baggage area. We do this throughout the country. We work with airlines, airports, and general contractors to help them with moving, and with decommissioning the systems. If they're replacing existing security equipment and putting in new, and many terminals are doing that, we help with the management and implementation of their security checkpoint. This includes design execution to ensure TSA requirements are met. We make sure that the equipment is installed in the proper positions and is operating to spec.

IF USA: When you say airports, do you mean big commercial airports or medium-sized ones?

K2: I mean it's all TSA regulated airports that can range in size. There are about 450 regulated airports in the country, and most of them are commercial or passenger-focused. We work at the very small to the very large. Most recently, we did the security checkpoint for LaGuardia Terminal B. We worked on projects at Atlanta, San Francisco, LAX, and Miami. We've done many in the last five to six years that involved the integration of the latest equipment called automated screening lanes.

Those are the ones that are integrated with the X-rays. The X-rays are the technology that screens your carry-on bags. What the automated screening lanes do is provide that automated bin return system. You put your carry-ons in the bin, and they are automatically conveyed through the X-ray machine, then all the way down to the return bin area. Once you're done with the bin, it automatically goes back to a person at the beginning of the checkpoint lane.

Many of the jobs that we do are focused on the installation of those automated screening lanes, but we also install



Steve Karoly of K2 Security Screening Group.

(Courtesy K2 Security Screening Group)

every type of security screening technology. I'm sure you've gone through a security checkpoint where you had to lift up your arms or walk through a metal detector. We install those technologies as well.

IF USA: Tell me a little bit about how you got started in this business.

K2: Sure. I retired from the government after 25 years of service, and my last five years were with TSA. I have been a systems engineer my entire career. I have worked in both DoD and DHS, always in the technology world. I have always liked working on implementing technology to be used in or to execute operational missions, be it DoD or DHS missions. So when I came to DHS, my focus turned to Homeland Security.

During my five years with TSA, I was able to learn a lot about what we do and how we do it in an aviation environment. I really enjoyed it. So when I retired, I decided to help execute the mission from an industry perspective.

IF USA: So do you have quite a few people working at K2 Security Screening Group who go out in the field and install the equipment?

K2: Yes, our company is a small business, and what's so great about that is that we can be agile. We can move on a dime. If someone says, "Hey, we need your help!" We can get the contractual documents signed and are able to deploy. As a small business, we have about 40 employees and we are growing. They focus on systems integration and project management, and then if we need to, we can bring on additional help. As an example, if we need to physically move equipment from a warehouse to an airport checkpoint, we hire other small businesses and other third parties to do it.

Our focus is to be the project integrator or systems integrator for these projects, and for that, you have to know every

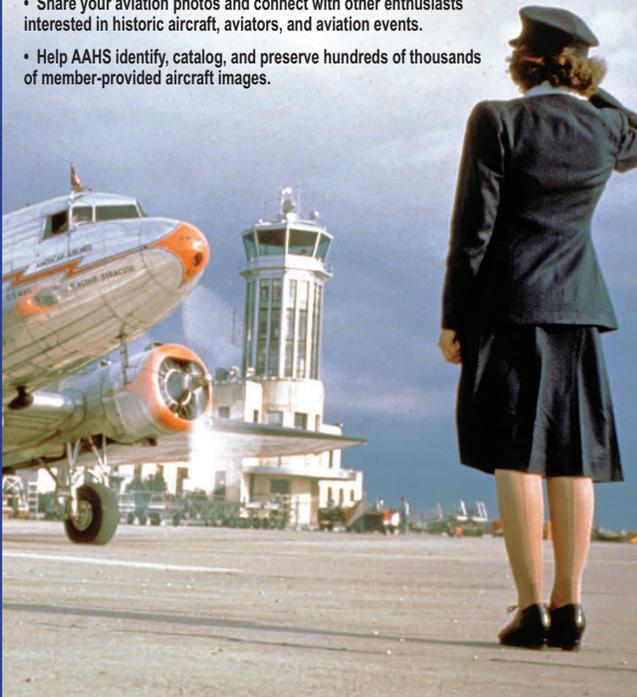
Continued on Page 38

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K2 Security Screening Group

Continued from Page 28

aspect of doing this job. It's not just about equipment, it's also about stakeholder engagement, for example. You have to be able to have those communications and interactions with the stakeholders because there are many of them in these airports. It is important to ensure that everyone is on the same page. You have to be able to take TSA requirements and incorporate them in your design and planning. Then you actually execute that integration and installation piece. The other part of it is aesthetics. People care about what things look like. It's not just about a checkpoint; it's about customer service. We have to help in that area and try to understand how to address the aesthetics.

IF USA: How long have you been doing this?

K2: I've been doing this for about nine years, but I have 30-plus years of technology/systems engineering experience.

IF USA: How are you getting most of your clients? Are you a government contractor or how do you get the airport to hire you to come in to do this?

K2: We respond to commercial and government proposals. For many years, we were on several contractor teams that

supported TSA. That's how it started. Now a lot of our work is through commercial venues. When a checkpoint needs to be moved, there are two ways of doing it. The first way is directed by TSA. They would be responsible for the move and would get their contractor team to move it. The second way is directed by the airport. The airport would be responsible for the move and at that point it is a commercial project. That's when they get other organizations involved. A lot of times, how we get the business is through word of mouth. We are good at what we do, so when people see, for example, LaGuardia Terminal B, they see how beautiful it looks and pass on our name to other airports and airport operators. We are a major player in executing checkpoint installations.

IF USA: Have you always been interested in airports and aviation or is this just something that came along as you were dealing with technology?

K2: I have always liked aviation. I find it very exciting. During my last DoD government position, I wanted to transition to DHS and work at TSA. I like supporting the Homeland Security mission. I think there was something in me that just drove me to do this.

IF USA: Do have any desire to get

involved with private, business, or general aviation?

K2: Yes, I think a lot has to do with overlap in the application of technologies. You still need security in those airports, and although the requirements are different, the threat is still out there. You still have to have security controls in place. A lot of the security technology that is used in one functional area can definitely be applied to another.

IF USA: What are your future plans for the company?

K2: We're really looking at continuing to work with TSA, airlines, airport operators, and general contractors. We also want to go outside the aviation industry and look at other transportation modes, like mass transit and cruise lines. There are a lot of opportunities out there that we need to seize. There are technologies that can be applied to those enterprises. Think about a cruise ship at a dock. They still have to screen people. Today, they are screening people for other things, like if they're bringing their own liquor on board. That's an entirely different thing, but you still have to have the technology in place to do that screening. We can apply what we do in the aviation enterprise with other transportation venues as well.



K2 plans, manages and installs security screening systems in airports, large and small. (K2 Security Screening Group)

IF USA: Do you think this can help car transportation systems, like Uber and Lyft, screen drivers for security purposes?

K2: Yes, absolutely. And speaking of that, we want things to be seamless across the transportation enterprise. As an example, we want to have all our payment systems on our phone apps integrated so that after your first transaction occurs in your Uber or Lyft, the next one can occur at the airport without having to restart the process. This will make the use of many apps, not just transportation ones, easier to use. Seamless and touchless!

IF USA: Thank you!



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