

Region IV Member Walter Korsgaard Honored



In March 2007, at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio Texas, a new building for the training of bomb-sniffing dogs was dedicated. The name of the building is “The Walter Korsgaard International Airport Canine Training Laboratory.” Along with the dedication, there were graduation ceremonies for 12 handlers and their dogs from various police stations and airports from around the country.

A tour of the new buildings and a demonstration of the dogs in action was provided. There were various real-life locations set up for the training including a train, airport terminal and warehouse so that the dogs would be comfortable and accustomed to any setting once out in the real world.

It was quite an honor for Walter, especially since he has been retired for 17 years. He is affectionately referred to as “the father of the dog program.”

Walter Korsgaard graduated from James Ford High School, Cleveland Ohio, in June 1945, and immediately joined the U.S. Army. He served his country for 25 years as a bomb disposal officer, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1970.

He graduated from the Explosive Ordnance Disposal School in Indian Head, MD in 1951, and returned there 17 times for training to make safe the newer bombs and missiles. He served in post-World War II in Germany for eight years. While serving in Korea, he was awarded two Bronze Stars, one for valor and one for exceptional service. A third Bronze star for valor was awarded in Vietnam, and he also received the Legion of Merit for exceptional service while there.

On loan from the Army in 1962, Korsgaard set up all the explosive work for the film “The Longest Day,” the movie of the Normandy Invasion directed by Darryl F. Zanuck. Upon his retirement from the Army, the Federal Aviation Administration in Washington, DC offered him a position as Aviation Explosive Security Program Manager, where he served for 20 years retiring in 1990.

During his career at the FAA, he was declared a **National Resource Specialist in Aviation Explosive Security**. This unique appointment is based on special skill levels in a specific

technical field which has gained industry-wide recognition, both nationally and internationally. Out of sixty-thousand-plus Federal Aviation Administration employees, only eight others were honored with this title.

Korsgaard designed and developed the “Least-Risk Bomb Location” concept, which is a procedure for making an aircraft, suspected of having a bomb on board, relatively safe until it can be landed and evacuated. He taught this procedure to pilots and flight attendants in the USA and many other countries.

The Least Risk Bomb Location concept has been adopted by the International Civil Aviation Organization and is used by most carriers throughout the world. Walter has lectured extensively in the United States, England, Jordan, Scotland, Denmark, Australia and many other countries. Korsgaard is recognized worldwide as an expert on Aviation Explosive Security. Another of his accomplishments was to initiate the canine bomb-sniffing program at airports around the country.

Korsgaard participated in the investigation of 23 major air disasters all over the world, including the TWA 800 disaster off the coast of Long Island and the Pan Am 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland in 1988. His findings as to whether or not explosives were involved in a crash have never been contravened. Korsgaard’s efforts as lead FAA/NTSB investigator for evidence of

explosives are detailed in the book “The Fall of Pan AM 103” by Steven Emerson.

Upon his retirement in 1990, Korsgaard received honors and awards from the United States Secret Service, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the United States Capital Police, the Department of Transportation, the FBI, the FAA and others. Needing 14 years to do so because of his demanding work and travel schedule, Korsgaard graduated from American University in Washington DC in 1978 (summa cum laude), at the age of 55 with a degree in Criminal Justice.

Korsgaard’s first wife, Grete, died after 51 years of marriage. They had no children. Meeting Rhodes High School friend Helen Binder Wolff at their 52nd high school reunion in 1998, the two developed a friendship that led to marriage in 2000. They have 5 adult children and 13 grandchildren. 🌟

Walter Korsgaard initiated the FMLEAA Canine Bomb Detection Program at airports around the country. His efforts were instrumental in the shaping of this country’s current involvement in transportation security.

It is the National Explosives Detection Canine Team Program’s distinct pleasure to dedicate a building in his honor. The building will hereby be called the **Walter Korsgaard International Airport Canine Training Laboratory**.