

Matthew Baird

Matthew Baird was the first director of the centralized Office of Training in the CIA and served in that capacity from 1951 to 1965. Mr. Baird was a graduate of Princeton University and had served as a Head Master of preparatory school before serving as a colonel in the United States Air Force during World War II. Known to Allen Dulles, then the Deputy Director for Operations and destined to become the Director of Central Intelligence, Mr. Baird was brought to the Agency to organize a training establishment to serve the rapidly growing organization. With the assistance of Professor Barnaby Keeney, Mr. Baird conceived and implemented the Junior Officer Training Program which subsequently evolved into the Career Trainee Program as we know it today. His personal interest in the selection and training of the young men and women brought in under this Program had a direct significant influence on the Agency and the way it did business during the critical decades of the 1950s and 1960s. His wisdom is reflected in the fact that the basic concepts and standards for such a training program that he established in the early 1950s are maintained to this day. Under Mr. Baird's leadership, a remote training facility was acquired in 1952 and a sophisticated operations training program was developed and conducted at that location. A demanding taskmaster and an inspired leader, Mr. Baird can be given justified credit for the high standards that have characterized the Agency's training program over the years. Mr. Baird retired in 1965 and died at his home in Bethany Beach in 1973.