

# UNITED STATES BIATHLON ASSOCIATION

## WILLIAM A. (BILL) SPENCER

### HALL OF FAME

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A member of the 1964 and 1968 Winter Olympic teams, Bill was born in Alabama and spent his early childhood in Bermuda. In 1948 his family moved to Utah when he was twelve years old and while attending South High School, he and his brother spent their weekends skiing at Brighton. Bill joined the Junior ROTC in high school which provided him the chance to begin competitive shooting. After high school, he joined the Utah National Guard and attended the University of Utah. He represented the Utah National Guard in national shooting competitions and joined the ski team at the University and achieved a best finish of 6<sup>th</sup> place in the 1959 NCAA cross-country ski championships.



His interest in biathlon began when he packed up his skis and hunting rifle, took a Greyhound bus to Reno and then hitchhiked to Squaw Valley to participate in the 1959 North American Biathlon Championships which were also the Pre-Olympic test event. He finished in 8<sup>th</sup> place and was hooked on biathlon. Bill returned for the Olympic tryouts in December but did not make the 1960 team. Determined to continue with biathlon he saw that the only way to do it would be join the U.S. Army and train at its center in Alaska. What

eventually became a 21-year career as an army officer, Bill spent the early part of his career at the USMBWTC and was a two-time national biathlon champion and the second U.S. finisher at both the Innsbruck and Grenoble Winter Olympic games at 30<sup>th</sup> and 37<sup>th</sup> places.

Because Bill's assignment to Vietnam was delayed so that he could participate at Grenoble, he was immediately reassigned to duty in Vietnam after the 1968 Games and arrived there just after the famous Tet offensive. In 1972 he was temporarily release from his second tour in Vietnam to be the team leader at Sapporo Olympic Games. Bill became one of U.S. Biathlon's long-time coaches, focusing mostly on the range and shooting. He was an athlete, coach or team leader at more than seven Olympic Games and played a major role at the Salt Lake Games in 2002. He was hired as the first Director for the National Guard program where he helped to establish the strong infrastructure that helped survive the difficult years following the U.S. Army's termination of its training center in Alaska. He also served on the USBA Board of Directors for many years and was the first American elected to UIMPB/IBU Biathlon Technical Committee where he served until being retired at the age of 60 years.

As an athlete role model, his many contributions and love for biathlon, Bill is welcomed as a member of the United States Biathlon Association's Hall of Fame.