

LPVRF Profile - Bill Finch

Robert Morrish



Loma Prieta Volunteer Fire & Rescue shares its response area with the CalFire Burrell Station, and is fortunate to have a great working relationship, and friendship, with the Burrell firefighters. One of the strongest proponents of that close relationship, CalFire Captain Bill Finch, will be retiring this coming August after 35 years with CalFire, including the last 10 ½ years working at the Burrell Station.

“I am 3rd-generation CDF,” notes Bill, “so you could say that I was born into the department.” After joining CalFire in 1978, he spent the early part of his career working first in Monterey and then at various stations in the San Mateo - Santa Cruz Unit. He was promoted to captain in 1999 while working at the Ben Lomond Conservation Camp, and arrived at Burrell in February 2003.

It's fairly uncommon for a firefighter, let alone a Captain, to stay at one station for as long as Bill has. For example, nine other Captains have passed through Burrell while he's been there (a station has two Captains, who alternate shifts). “Sometimes you find a station that fits with who you are,” says Bill. “You find that you like the station and the community and you just stay.”

“The volunteers at Loma Prieta Fire and Rescue are a big reason that I've stayed at Burrell for as long as I have,” he adds. “They made me feel welcome here and took me in as one of their own. It's been a true honor to work with them. They are true professionals -- and just plain good people.”

When asked about some of the more memorable calls he's been on, Bill says, “I have 30 years of memories. There are the big fires as well as the small ones, the 1989 earthquake certainly ranks high, and there are the traffic accidents, and medical calls. I think the emergency medical calls are the ones that stick with you the most -- and those are often the ones you most want to forget.”

Bill lives in Scotts Valley with his wife of 25 years and his son, and plans on staying put after he retires. “All of our friends live here in the greater Santa Cruz area, so I don't see us going anywhere any time soon. The weather is here!” Bill notes that his wife has been greatly supportive throughout his career. “She knows that the fire department is my second family. And she can pack my out-of-county travel bag better than most firefighters can pack their own!”

Bill enjoys cooking and plans to spend some of his newfound spare time taking cooking classes. And he adds, "I have a friend who is a winemaker. He tells me he'll need help from time to time and that he can only pay me in wine."

In closing, Bill says, "I'll see you all at the Loma Prieta Volunteer Fire and Rescue BBQ on the first Sunday in June!"