

# VFW Hosts Independence Day Celebration at Holloman

Jul 29, 2009

This year, Terry Benson, member of Post 7686 and Department Chief of Staff, wanted to help plan an Independence Day to remember in a town that never forgets.

Alamogordo, N.M., is home to Holloman Air Force Base and more than 5,000 retired veterans and 3,000 active duty service members, making it a prime location for a patriotic celebration.

“Post 7686 is constantly working with Holloman AFB,” said Benson. “Most of our memberships come from there. We knew we wanted to help so we applied for and received a VFW Military Assistance Program grant.”

Benson worked with Holloman Air Force Base Marketing Director, Amanda Gallagher, to host the event.

The celebration was held at the base and was open to anyone with military identification and their guests. More than 1,500 people turned out for family-style entertainment: go karts, small carnival rides, a car show, concession stands and, of course, lots of fireworks.

With the help of volunteers, a large circus tent was set up to provide shade on the hot day. Under the tent, free hamburgers and hotdogs were served.

“Holloman AFB is constantly sending troops to war. However, the Air Force doesn’t normally deploy in large units like the Army, so they usually don’t receive a large send-off,” said Benson. “We wanted to shine light on those troops and acknowledge the many military retirees in the area.”

Six members of VFW Post 7686 hosted an informational booth at the event to give guests an opportunity to find out more about VFW.

“It was delightful to be able to share war stories with younger service members,” said Benson, “But it was even more delightful to give them an idea of what VFW is all about.”

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“We work to give you what you need. That’s what I told them,” Benson concluded.