

'Beyond My Expectations'

Post hosts benefit on behalf of police officer

Mar 14, 2023

Every Friday, VFW Post 6461 members in Fountain, Colorado, host a dinner on behalf of a cause or simply to come together in camaraderie. On Feb. 10, however, the dinner was a rallying call for an Air Force veteran and Fountain Police officer on life support.

Post 6461 was filled to the brim with hundreds of people supporting Julian Becerra, 35, who police said fell 40 feet off a bridge while pursuing a carjacking suspect in Colorado Springs earlier in the week.

"This was beyond my expectations," said Steve Kjonaas, a former VFW Department of Colorado commander. "I knew there was going to be a lot of people there, but I've never seen so many people inside this building."

Kjonaas joined Post 6461 Commander Travis Baker and Post members in helping raise funds from the benefit dinner on behalf of Becerra, who had served just four years in the police department since his service in the Air Force.

For Baker, the story of Becerra had a deep-rooted connection to his own.

"Nine years ago this year, I fell 50 feet off of the side of a mountain and that ended my military career," said Baker, whose military career spanned 23 years prior to his injury. "Then we found out that he was not only police, but an Air Force veteran. That brought it even more to heart for us veterans of the VFW."

Though Becerra remained on life support throughout that Friday night, the Air Force veteran died the next night at Penrose Hospital in Colorado Springs, according to police officials. He is survived by his wife and two children.

The money raised, more than \$5,750, will be presented to the surviving family during a Fountain city council meeting on March 14.

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