

Remembering



This is Justin Johnson. His buddies knew him as J.J. The day Osama bin Laden ignited a full-blown war with the United States, Justin's gut and heart told him to defend his country. He hounded his parents, Joe and Jan Johnson, until Joe went with him to the recruiters' office. Joe knew something about recruiters – he had served twice before.

Justin prepared for his personal encounters with the radical Muslim terrorists as he trained at Fort Hood, Texas. He befriended Casey Sheehan, the son of anti-war protester Cindy Sheehan and a proud American soldier.

Justin and Casey went to Iraq to fight for America's safety. They died six days apart in Sadr City at the hands of al Sadr's guerilla and terrorist army. Casey died April 4, 2004. Justin followed his friend on April 10, 2004.

Move America Forward Chairman Melanie Morgan and I wrote their story in our book "American Mourning."

Today we remember Justin and Casey and the 3,000 innocents who died on Sept. 11, 2001, in an unprovoked attack on American soil.

This portrait of Justin was beautifully created by Leah Hopkins Henry, who has graciously made several portraits of fallen soldiers as part of a project called "Art from the Heart." Other southern artists have also painted portraits of other Georgia soldiers who died in Iraq and Afghanistan for the project.

The 20 x 24 oil portraits are donated to the families in honor of the sacrifices these young men and women have made for this country," Hopkins Henry wrote to me.

An exhibit of these portraits with biographies will be shown at the National Museum of Patriotism in Atlanta through Veterans Day, Nov. 11.

I want to thank Hopkins Henry and all of the artists for remembering our troops.

For more information on the exhibit, please go to <http://www.leahhenry.com>