(House of Representatives - November 17, 2009)

Mrs. Speaker, there are many heroes who have served our Nation from the Sixth Congressional District of Colorado. Today I rise to pay tribute to one hero in particular. Marine Corps First Lieutenant Thomas Claiborne of Parker, Colorado. On October 29, 2009, First Lieutenant Claiborne was lost when his Marine Super Cobra collided with a Coast Guard C-130 during an escort mission off the coast of California. The lives of the crew of both aircraft were lost in this tragic training accident.

First Lieutenant Claiborne graduated from the University of Colorado magna cum laude on a full Navy ROTC scholarship in May 2006 with a degree in aerospace engineering and later earned his wings as a pilot in the United States Marine Corps. He is remembered as a fine young man, an outstanding student and a dedicated Marine Corps officer who had always dreamed of flying. First Lieutenant Thomas Claiborne was a shining example of the Marine Corps traditions. As a fellow marine, my deepest sympathies go out to his family and to all that knew him.