

# Last week, one pilot made headlines

The other 588,656 did not

**Every day, thousands of General Aviation airplanes take to the air in the U.S. without running afoul of the complex, post-9/11 airspace restrictions.**

Seven days ago, one very small airplane created a very large incident that disrupted lives in Washington, D.C., and made millions of people, already on edge, very nervous. It also created unnecessary concern and skepticism about “those little planes.”

This incident occurred in the face of a long-term, multi-faceted education effort by the world’s largest aviation association, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Some of our on-going efforts include:

- **AOPA sent almost 5 million emails** to members in 2004 to advise them of temporary airspace restrictions – often due to the President’s travel – that could adversely affect their flight plans.
- **Our website** contains a wealth of information and resources – including a remarkable flight planner that graphically depicts airspace restrictions.
- **The AOPA Airport Watch** program. Based on the successful Neighborhood Watch concept, it is uniformly lauded by government officials and security experts.
- **The AOPA Air Safety Foundation** connected with 327,222 pilots and flight instructors last year through its online and live seminars and other materials, many of which are devoted to airspace restrictions.
- **Pilot Town Meetings** allow AOPA president Phil Boyer to personally reach thousands more pilots a year.

That’s a lot... and there’s more, with more to come. But as one of our members from Columbus, OH, just emailed us: *Between AOPA and the FAA, I think it's reasonable to say that these two organizations have done all they can to make pilots aware of the rules regarding the Washington, D.C., airspace. AOPA always goes above and beyond what most people would expect even a pilot advocacy group would do for its members and the aviation industry.*

#### WHAT WENT RIGHT

Last week proved that **the system works**. We wholeheartedly commend the remarkable men and women who monitor the capital area’s skies and the crews of the F-16s and Black Hawk helicopter. Their quick and correct assessment of the situation—and appropriate actions—kept everyone safe.

There are hundreds of thousands of Americans – perhaps a friend or neighbor of yours—who proudly call themselves a “pilot.” They safely fly millions of miles a year. While it was a simple mistake, no pilot is happy about how this reflects on them.

AOPA will continue our work to educate and inform General Aviation pilots and advocate on their behalf. Because keeping General Aviation pilots, airplanes and airports safe are important efforts in maintaining our freedom to fly. And keeping the nation secure protects the freedom of all.

**Every day, General Aviation—safely and securely—Serves America.**



AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION