

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199400733**

**Piper Aircraft Corp
Navajo
Piper Aircraft Corp
Twin Comanchee**

22 March 1994

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NOTE: All air safety occurrences reported to the ATSB are categorised and recorded. For a detailed explanation on Category definitions please refer to the ATSB website at www.atsb.gov.au.

Occurrence Number: 199400733 **Occurrence Type:** Incident
Location: 56km ENE Wagga Wagga
State: NSW **Inv Category:** 4
Date: Tuesday 22 March 1994
Time: 1726 hours **Time Zone** EST
Highest Injury Level: None

Aircraft Manufacturer: Piper Aircraft Corp
Aircraft Model: PA-39
Aircraft Registration: VH-ICS **Serial Number:** 39-068
Type of Operation:
Damage to Aircraft: Nil
Departure Point: Bairnsdale VIC
Departure Time: 1620 EST
Destination: Tamworth NSW

Crew Details:

Role	Class of Licence	Hours on	
		Type	Hours Total
Pilot-In-Command	Commercial	50.0	800

Aircraft Manufacturer: Piper Aircraft Corp
Aircraft Model: PA-31
Aircraft Registration: VH-AWW **Serial Number:** 31-286
Type of Operation: Air Transport Non-scheduled Passenger
Damage to Aircraft: Nil
Departure Point: Bathurst NSW
Departure Time: 1640 EST
Destination: Albury NSW

Approved for Release: Tuesday, August 9, 1994

While enroute between Corryong and Bathurst, the pilot of VH-ICS called Canberra Approach and requested a clearance to enter Canberra controlled airspace. An attempt was made by air traffic control to identify the aircraft but due to poor radar coverage, in the area and the aircraft's altitude, this could not be achieved. In response the pilot was instructed to remain outside controlled airspace.

Subsequently a brief radar return from VH-ICS was observed in the Wagga controlled airspace, about 20NM west of the planned track of the aircraft. There was inadequate radar contact to allow radar separation standards to be applied. The aircraft track conflicted with that of VH-AWW which was tracking in the opposite direction.

The pilot of VH-ICS said, that in hindsight, he should have planned a route that had more navigational aids to assist with track maintenance. He was tracking on a back bearing from the Corryong NDB and was unable to obtain a distance from the Canberra international DME. Hence he was unable to accurately determine his position and ascertain that he was off the planned track.

Significant Factors

The following factors were considered relevant to the development of the incident:

- 1 The route planning by the pilot was poor.
- 2 The aircraft was not equipped with a domestic DME.
- 3 The enroute track maintenance by the pilot was inadequate.

