



Profile 44 - D3A2 Model 22 MN 3571, tail code 52-265, Keravat, January 1944, pilot Flyer1c Hiramatsu Norihiko, observer FPO1c Hayashita Mitsuru

This Model 22 participated in the suite of dive-bombing missions from 17 to 31 December 1943 against Arawe (Cape Merkus) on West New Britain. It was lost in the early hours of 14 January 1944 after departing in the early morning with three other Vals for a night attack against US Marines on Mono Island. Led by *hikotaicho* Lieutenant (jg) Yamaguchi Tomojiro, each Val toted one 250-kilogram bomb, with an extra 60-kilogram bomb lugged by the fourth dive-bomber. Over the target at 0220 they were intercepted by radar-equipped F4U-2 Corsairs from VF(N)-75. FPO1c Hayashita Mitsuru's Val was shot up and later crashed into New Britain hills when trying to make home, either due to marginal conditions or an impaired airframe. The operations sheet notes that the wounded Hayashita was assisted by villagers to reach the coast from where an IJN launch returned him to Rabaul. The pilot Flyer1c Hiramatsu Norihiko was buried near the crash site by villagers.

Profile 45 - D3A2 Model 22 tail code 52-251, Kerevat, January 1944, *hikotaicho* pilot Lieutenant Hayashihara Moto'o

This Model 22 Val carries two horizontal tail stripes indicating Hayashihara's *chutaicho* status within No. 552 *Ku*.