

# Nigel Leakey

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## Nigel Leakey



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<b>Born</b>	1 January 1913 Kiganjo, Kenya
<b>Died</b>	19 May 1941 Kolito, Abyssinia
<b>Allegiance</b>	Kenya
<b>Rank</b>	Sergeant
<b>Unit</b>	King's African Rifles
<b>Battles/wars</b>	World War II
<b>Awards</b>	Victoria Cross

**Nigel Gray Leakey VC** (1 January 1913 – 19 May 1941) was a Kenyan recipient of the Victoria Cross, the highest and most prestigious award for gallantry in the face of the enemy that can be awarded to British and Commonwealth forces.

## Contents

- 1 Details
- 2 The medal
- 3 References
- 4 See also

## Details

Born on 1 January 1913 in Kiganjo, Kenya, Leakey was the son of Arundel Gray Leakey,<sup>[1]</sup> a cousin of Louis Leakey. He was 28 years old, and a sergeant in the 1/6th Battalion, King's African Rifles during the Second World War when the following deed took place for which he was awarded the VC. Leakey's 1/6th Battalion was part of the 22nd (East African) Brigade (12th African Division).

On 19 May 1941, in World War II, at Kolito, Abyssinia (now Ethiopia), when the Allied forces had made a bridgehead against the strong Italian opposition, the enemy made a sudden counterattack with both light and medium tanks. In the face of withering fire, Sergeant Leakey leaped on top of one of the tanks, wrenched open the turret and shot all the crew except the driver, whom he forced to drive the tank to cover. Along with three others, he tried to repeat this with another tank, but just as he opened the turret, he was killed. The confusion and loss of armour Leakey caused was critical to the Italian defeat in the battle.<sup>[2]</sup> Captain David Hines witnessed the event through binoculars, as did other soldiers.<sup>[3][4]</sup>

Leakey has no known grave but he is commemorated on the East Africa Memorial, near Nairobi, Kenya.<sup>[5]</sup>

## The medal

Leakey's medal is kept by a member of the Leakey family in England.

## References

1. Arundel Gray Leakey suffered an unfortunate fate in the Mau Mau rebellion. This was described in *Time Magazine* for Monday 1 November 1954, under *Blood Brother*.
  2. *The London Gazette*: (Supplement) no. 37349. p. 5571. 13 November 1945. Retrieved 3 February 2011.
  3. [Two-hour interview by WD Ogilvie of David Hines in 1999]
  4. Obituary by WD Ogilvie in the London *Daily Telegraph* 8 April 2000.
  5. CWGC entry
- C. S. Nicholls, *Red Strangers: The White Tribe of Kenya*, Timewell Press, 2005, ISBN 1-85725-206-3. Online preview available at [\[1\]](#) in Google Books.