



A fifties fishing trip aboard *Fina* off Barskär, Stockholm *skärgård* (archipelago). The photo was taken by Karl Hallström (skipper and son to Thord's oldest brother Gunnar).  
**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:** Gustaf (Thord's younger brother), Karl's sons Sverker and Thord (junior), and Thord with fishing rod.

## PREFACE

IVOR THORD-GRAY was born in Stockholm in 1878 and died in Miami in 1964. As a child he was called Ivor Thord Hallström, but changed his name to Ivor Thord-Gray when he joined the British army in South Africa in 1897. His first name in the family and among friends was always Thord, and his nickname ‘Tortan’. The name Thord is used throughout this narrative.

The account is divided into two parts. Chapters I and II and part of Chapter III – up to the end of his service on Robben Island – are Thord’s own recollections of his childhood and youth. These recollections were written by Thord himself when he was more than 80 years old and were initially addressed to the younger generation of his family.

In the preface to these chapters, he gave an account of his family history. That part of the story has been omitted here, except for his feelings and experiences in connection with his own marriages, which are described in Chapter X.

The rest of the account (Chapters III to X) is my attempt to write a biography, based mainly upon what he wrote himself in letters to his parents and brothers, as well as his diary and other writings dating from his arrival in South Africa up to his death. I have drawn most of my information from about 600 catalogued original documents, books, and press cuttings.

It is to be regretted that Thord did not compile this biography himself, although he was frequently urged to do so and was afforded opportunities to have his life story published. This was never done, mainly for two reasons. Firstly, he was always busy, right up to the end, which is evident from the last chapter of this book. But it is also clear that in writing about his life he wanted to be absolutely honest about everything he had seen and experienced. This, he believed, would have offended people he had encountered over the years and might have had other negative consequences, such as litigation.

I am aware of a certain imbalance in my narrative: Some events are described in great detail, others more briefly. This is partly because some of the relevant documentation is meagre. I also tried to focus on the parts of Thord’s story that I

**Thord's book *Gringo Rebel* is based on his own war diary and letters to his brothers.**

considered to be of greater interest to readers. Thord sometimes mentioned that he had lost diary notes or other memoranda that might have shed light upon his story. He tried to fill these gaps with letters or notes. I have concentrated on Thord's personal experiences. In order to connect these to the greater whole, I have considered it both relevant and most important to resort to other sources.

In Chapter II Thord remarks that he has changed the names of ships and their crews at the suggestion of his legal advisor. My brother, late sea captain Sten G Hallström, commented on this as follows: 'As can be seen from the notes above, Thord has changed the names of the ship and its captain to fictional ones, as is common in America (in order to avoid retaliatory measures etc).' But I do not see any reason to do this here. Anyway, it should be quite clear that the ship in this case must have been the Swedish barque, *Fredrik av Nyhamn*.

Similarly, in Chapter VIII Thord calls himself Colonel Green in a description of the 1st Siberian Assault Battalion's transportation to the front. He may have done so because he intended to publish the story later on.

Chapter III contained extensive material about the Boer War that is of very limited interest nowadays. It has therefore been sifted in order to keep only those parts that are characteristic of everyday life in war. Thord's material from the Second Zulu War in 1906 has been treated with greater interest because he had become more experienced and could therefore see the tactical situation as part of a greater whole.

The basis of Chapter VI is the very detailed account of the Mexican Civil War that Thord himself wrote in his book *Gringo Rebel* (*Gringo Bland Rebell* in Swedish). The book is based on his own war diary and letters to his brothers that were published in the Stockholm press. Thord later asked to have these letters returned, to help him in writing his book. His account of the war in the book is too extensive to be rendered here, so I refer those who are interested to *Gringo Rebel*. Here I have restricted myself to an outline and some reflections. It is worth mentioning that Thord wrote the book 45 years after it all happened, and that another quarter of a century has passed since he wrote it. He also points this out in the preface, saying that the book reflects how he experienced events at the time, without the benefit of many years' hindsight. He admits to suppressing some facts to avoid embarrassing old friends or their families.

Thord also points out that he does not deal with every aspect of the revolution: to ensure consistency in his story he limits himself to the relatively narrow part played by the cavalry, to the situations in which he himself was active, and to what he saw. He was fully aware that such a limited account could not provide a complete picture.

If this is true about Thord's book, it is much more so about this one.

Thord's statements must of course be seen in the light of the time and place – and the circumstances in which they were made, which applies to any participation in historical events.

Chapters VIII and IX on the Siberian campaign required some research into the forces that prevailed in that part of the world at the time, as this background does

not always emerge clearly from Thord's own experiences. The overview I present here is based mainly on reports and figures from *The White Armies of Russia* by George Stewart, MacMillan, New York 1933, and *Les Armées Blanches* by Marina Grey and Jean Bourdier, Edition Stock, Paris 1968.

**Arne G Hallström, nephew of Ivor Thord-Gray**



**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:** Sten Rinaldo, husband to Gustaf's daughter Birgitta; Bengt Rinaldo; Thord Hallström and his brother Sverker (half hidden); Magdalena Rinaldo on Ivor Thord's lap; and Gustaf Hallström.