On 30 September 1948, American pilot Bobby Earl Freeberg fired up the twin engines of his war-surplus C-47 cargo airplane, designated RI-002, for a mission to transport 250 kilograms of gold bullion from Java to Sumatra in preparation for an expected Dutch invasion of Indonesian territory. RI-002 then vanished, the wreckage only found 30 years later in the remote Sumatra highlands.

The mysterious disappearance of Bob Freeberg was the final, ironic twist in one of the most dramatic―and least-known―chapters in the story of Indonesia. For sixteen months, Bob Freeberg ran the Dutch blockade, flying in critical supplies such as medicines, and carrying out the diplomats and experts who would make the case for Indonesian independence to the world.

Now, the story of Bob Freeberg is told by the Indonesian who knew him best. Air Force Captain Petit Muharto Kartodirdjo flew with Freeberg as official mission leader and (unofficial) copilot, until being promoted and reassigned to headquarters shortly before the tragic final flight. One Man Air Force is the dramatic account of the birth of a nation, of two idealistic young men from opposite ends of the globe forging a close friendship, and a compelling tale of Petit Muharto’s efforts in later life to solve the mystery of his friend’s disappearance.

“What emerges from this story is two highly intelligent, courageous and stubborn men who were moved by injustice and willing to fight against it.” — Tamalia Alisjahbana, *Independent Observer*

“One Man Air Force is a fascinating tale of the bravery and ingenuity that attended Indonesia’s birth. It recalls an era of heroic idealism that should always be cherished.” — Michael Vatikiotis, author of *Blood and Silk*

“History, revolution, adventure, thriller, mystery, exotic tropical setting, dashing young pilot risking his life for an aspiring republic - what’s not to like about *One Man Air Force*?” — Julia Suryakusuma, author of *Julia’s Jihad*