On August 17, 1945, Indonesia proclaimed its independence from Dutch colonial rule. Five years later, the Republic of Indonesia was recognized as a unified, sovereign state. The period in between was a time of aspiration, mobilization, and violence, in which nationalists fought to expel the Dutch while also attempting to come to grips with the meaning of “independence.” Rifle Reports is an ethnographic history of this extraordinary time as it was experienced on the outskirts of the nation: among Karo Batak villagers in the rural highlands of North Sumatra. Karo were in the thick of the action throughout the war for independence. In 1947, many highland villages were burned and virtually the entire population fled the advancing Dutch army. Karo today see this as an iconic moment in their move to modernity and a demonstration of the magnitude of their sacrifice for the nationalist cause, which has nevertheless been mostly disregarded or forgotten in Indonesia today. Based on extensive interviews and conversations with Karo veterans, Rifle Reports interweaves personal and family memories, songs and stories, memoirs and local histories, photographs and monuments, to trace the variously tangled and perhaps incompletely understood ways that Karo women and men contributed to the founding of the Indonesian nation. The routes they followed are divergent, difficult, sometimes wavering, and rarely obvious, but they are clearly marked with the signs of gender. An innovative historical study of nationalism and decolonization and an anthropological exploration of the gendering of wartime experience, this is also an inquiry into the work of storytelling, both as memory practice and ethnographic genre.