Preface

Someone once told me that theory is autobiography. I found that proposition intuitively attractive, but I remain unconvinced that it is entirely true or the whole story. Nonetheless, I’m fairly certain that my interest in international relations, particularly with the causes of war and peace, reflects the post-war context of my childhood and the unrealized prospect of being drafted during the Vietnam War. My father escaped the war in the Pacific Theatre without a scratch, although the carnage to which he was witness and contributed left him deeply scarred psychologically: when I first heard the phrase ‘thousand yard stare’ no one needed to define it for me. But it also left him quite philosophical about war and a marked disinclination to moral certitude. The harvest of his experiences left me deeply sceptical of both the utility of war and the prospects for an unbroken peace. Nonetheless, it would be nice if the study and practice of security governance made war less likely.

I would also like to take the opportunity to acknowledge other family members who fought and some of whom died in World War II (Gordon Campbell, William Fraser, MBE, James Fraser, Alexander Fraser, James Macdonald, Miles Sperling and John Stewart), the fathers of close friends who did so (Milton Bergantz, Jack Flemmer and Gordon Rogét), the families of close friends who were interned during the war for no reason other than their national origin (among them the Kaida, Sasaki and Yamada families), and cousins who served during Vietnam (Gordon Campbell Jr and John Stewart Jr) as did a schoolyard friend, Richard Thomas, who was killed there.