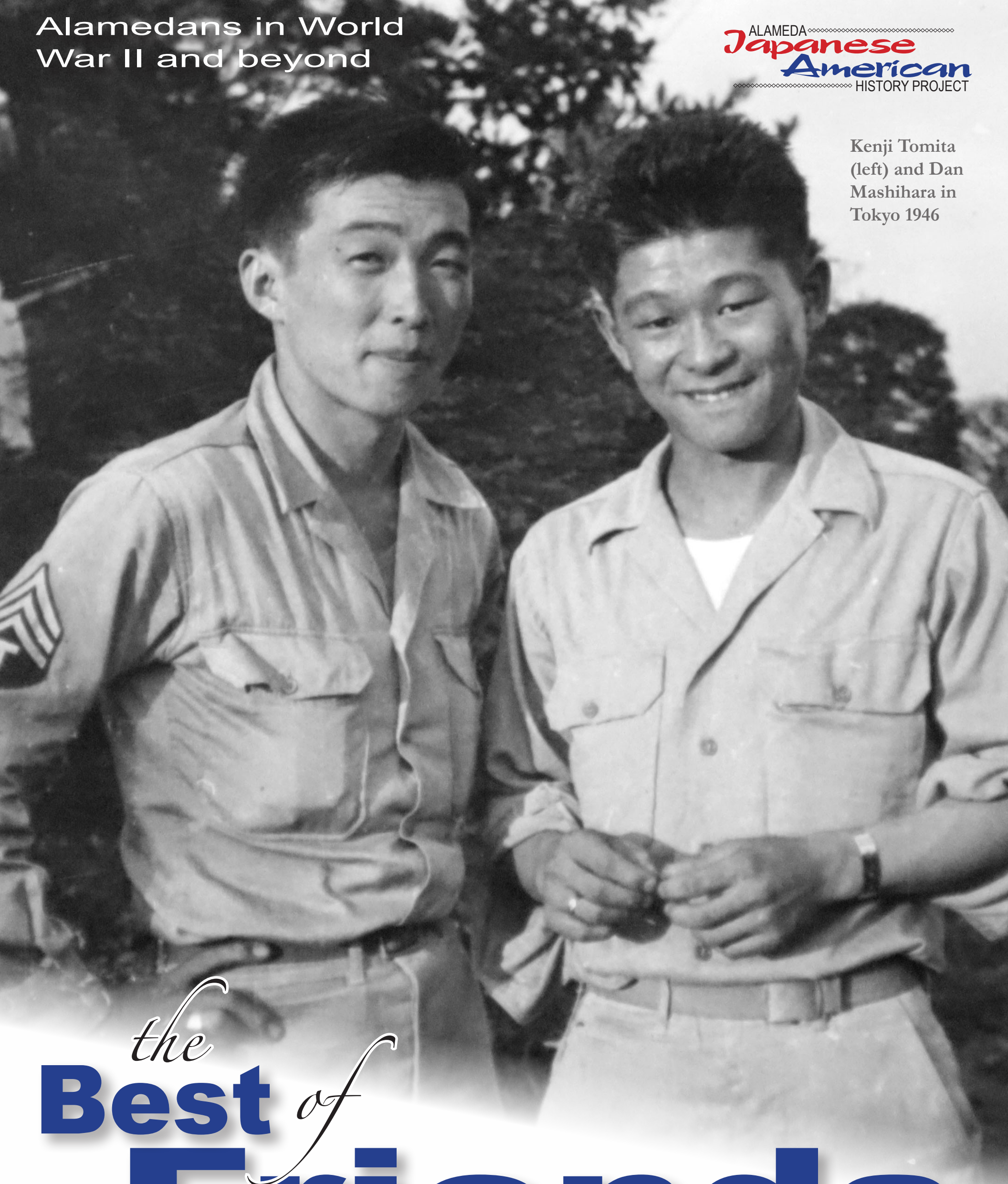


Kenji Tomita  
(left) and Dan  
Mashihara in  
Tokyo 1946



*the*  
**Best of**  
**Friends**

Tokyo, Japan is some 5000 miles from California, But just after World War II, great friends Kenji Tomita and Dan Mashihara found themselves working across the Pacific Ocean. Dan, born in Boston, grew up in Alameda, Kenji's California hometown. After the Imperial

Japanese Army was defeated by America, both men would work for the U.S. Army in Tokyo, as part of the Military Intelligence Service (MIS).

When Kenji married Mary Nakata in 1957, Dan was his best man. Their



Front row center is Dan, back row far right is Kenji in this circa late 1930s photo.



friendship began long before the war began, on the island city of Alameda, just across the bay from San Francisco.

Born in 1924, Dan was living in Alameda by 1929, with his grandparents, Karoku and Shime Iwamasa, longtime members of the Japanese Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

Kenji was born on the island the same year as Dan and was also attending JME. It's probably where they met as kids.

As young men in the early 1940s, they assisted with events at the church and both would play basketball for the Acorns "C" team, made up of members from JME and the Buddhist Temple. On January 21, 1941, Dan, all of 5'6" tall, played center and scored a whopping two points. Kenji scored six.

Dan graduated from Alameda High School in 1942, worked at a chicken farm in Illinois, was incarcerated in Tule Lake and then enlisted in the U.S. Army on June 30, 1945. Kenji was

in the MIS, working with Russian documents while in Japan.

Dan was engaging and friendly. "Most positive, happy, likeable, easy-going person," said his daughter, Lisa Mashihara Westley. "He laughed easily, always had a smile on his face."

Dan loved baseball, too. While in Tule Lake, he played there. "He made camp sound like summer camp," Dan's son-in-law, Peter Westley, said. "They had fun playing baseball."

After the war, Kenji and Dan continued to hang out together. They ocean fished often, taking charter boats onto the San Francisco Bay.

When Dan's daughter, Lisa, was born, the Tomitas and Mashiharas would spend every Thanksgiving together. "They were my parents' closest friends until my dad died," Lisa said.

"Those two were like two peas in a pod," said Mary Tomita.





Kenji marries Mary Nakata in Berkeley, CA., with Dan as his best man in 1957.