



Camp Parks Preps for African American Heritage Celebration

On February 23 Camp Parks is planning to celebrate African Heritage month by conducting an event commemorating the contributions of the African American community in the United States Army. Events will include a guest speaker, musical entertainment and food sampling. The Guest speaker will be Command Sgt. Major Connie Commenia, former CSM of Camp Parks Garrison Command and current CSM to the Army Reserve

Careers Division. The musical guest will be Marcus Shelby, a nationally recognized jazz bassist who resides and works in the bay area.

Military personnel, PRFTA Residents, Army civilian employees are invited to attend. The event will be located at the Post Chapel and will begin at 11:30 a.m. and conclude at 1 p.m. Others who are interested attending contact the Camp Parks Public Affairs Office for more information.



Command Sgt. Maj. Connie Commenia grew up on a sugar cane plantation in Chamberlain, Louisiana, until she was 13. She is the oldest girl of 11 children – nine girls and two boys – and grew up poor. After she graduated high school in 1972, her father wanted her to go on to college, but the family couldn't afford it. However, the life values her parents taught her, and the lifestyle she lived while on the plantation, drew her to enlist in the Army Reserve in 1974, where she graduated at the top of her Women's Army Corps (WAC) basic training class. While in the Army Reserve, she eventually went to college and became the first in her family to earn a degree. She earned a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Faulkner University in Montgomery, Ala., and a master's degree in Public Administration in 1994 from Troy State University, Atlanta, Ga. During this second graduation ceremony, she took the cap and tassel off her head and placed it on father, to thank him for all he had done for her and her family throughout her life.



Marcus Anthony Shelby is an accomplished teacher, composer, arranger, and bassist who currently lives in San Francisco, California. Over the past 20 years, he has built a diverse biography. From 1990-1996, Shelby was bandleader of Columbia Records and GRP Impulse! Recording Artists Black/Note and is currently the Artistic Director and leader of The Marcus Shelby Orchestra, The Marcus Shelby Hot 7, and the The Marcus Shelby Trio. Shelby was awarded a 2009 Black Metropolis Research Consortium Fellowship in Chicago for summer 2009 to conduct research for his commission to compose "Soul of the Movement". Shelby was also a 2006 Fellow in the Resident Dialogues Program of the Committee for Black Performing Arts at Stanford University to conduct research for his commission to compose "Harriet Tubman". Shelby also has had the honor of arranging for and conducting the Count Basie Orchestra featuring Ledisi, performing and recording with Tom Waits, and receiving the City Flight Magazine 2005 award as one of the "Top Ten Most Influential African Americans in the Bay Area". As the 1991 winner of the Charles Mingus Scholarship, Shelby's studies include work under the tutelage of composer James Newton and legendary bassist Charlie Haden. Shelby is also very active in music education and currently teaches at Rooftop Alternative School in San Francisco, the Stanford Jazz Workshop at Stanford University, and also the Oakland Public Conservatory.

