

# Second largest class graduates Sergeants Major Course

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*USASMA Public Affairs*

Friday will mark the end of a nine-month saga for nearly 600 U.S. Army noncommissioned officers, NCOs from sister services and foreign soldiers who have just completed the Army's top level of non-commissioned officer education, the Sergeants Major Course.

The students will receive their coveted DA Form 1059s, the Army's equivalent to a graduation diploma, during a 10 a.m. ceremony at the Abraham Chavez Theater.

The Sergeants Major Course is a resident program of instruction conducted once a year at the academy. The course prepares new and prospective sergeants major for their duties as senior NCOs in positions throughout the Department of Defense and allied nations.

This year for the graduation of SMC Class 56, the Combined Arms Center Commander Lt. Gen. David Petraeus will be the guest speaker for the event. Other distinguished guests slated to attend the ceremony are Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston, the sergeants major of the Army for both Jamaica and the Netherlands, the command sergeants major of the Training and Doctrine and the Combined Arms Center, Command Sgt. Maj. John Sparks and Command Sgt. Maj. Cory McCarty, respectively.

Participation in the program is highly selective and consists of NCOs in the ranks of master sergeant and sergeant major and equivalent ranks from sister services and allied nations. Course completion is mandatory for promotion to sergeant major and command sergeant major. The joint and combined



COURTESY PHOTO

**Members of Class 55 listen to the guest speaker during their graduation ceremony May 20, 2005, at the Abraham Chavez Theater.**

arms perspective is enhanced through course attendance by members of the Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard and international military services.

This year, 648 students attended the course, including 45 foreign soldiers representing 29 countries and eight sister service NCOs. Forty-six students who were being reassigned to deploying units graduated last month.

While attending the academy, students also enroll in continuing college education programs with

many earning their bachelor's and masters degrees. Those not attending college classes volunteer hundreds of hours in community service projects.

The ceremony is open to the public but seating is limited. Guests who wish to attend the ceremony should plan to arrive no later than 9:15 a.m. in order to find parking and seating before the ceremony begins. The Abraham Chavez Theater is located at 1 Civic Center Plaza in downtown El Paso.



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