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Ada visits Kagman maritime program

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MARITIME LOT: Kagman High School students enrolled in the basic training personal survival techniques course pose with

The Western Pacific Maritime Academy announced Commissioner Alfred Ada made a surprise visit to Kagman High School to observe the maritime studies program, according to a release from the organization.

WPMA is offering its U.S. Coast Guard-approved basic training personal survival techniques (BT-PST) course to Kagman High students in a pilot program. The course is one of five basic training courses that qualify candidates to work as professional mariners on large merchant marine ships similar to those anchored off the pristine beaches off Saipan. Capt. Dave Johansen is teaching the course, the release stated.

The BT-PST is a 14-hour course that teaches students the foundational knowledge and skills of how to survive disaster at sea through both written exam and practical exercises. Knowledge includes shipboard emergency response, types of shipboard emergencies, principles of survival at sea, understanding survival craft and equipment and techniques for abandoning ship. Practical exercises are conducted to prove skills in donning a life jacket, cold weather immersion suites, treading water, turning their clothing into flotation devices and boarding a life raft, according to the release.

To date, seven maritime students, who are known as “midshipmen,” have received their Merchant Mariner Credential. During Ada’s visit, Midshipman Kenshiro Yanai presented his MMC with much pride. WPMA is running pilot programs for a total of 24 midshipmen both at KHS and DA’OK Academy. By the 2023-2024 school year, WPMA expects to be expanding to all high schools in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, including Tinian and Rota.

WPMA’s maritime workforce development program steers candidates into high paying jobs in the maritime sector as entry level credentialed professional mariners as deck seamen, engineers or members of the catering department. An entry level seaman in the U.S. Merchant Marine can earn upwards of \$5,000 to \$7,000 per month through one of a number of maritime unions or military sealift command. In the wake of COVID-19, the maritime sector is experiencing a huge demand for credentialed mariners, the release stated.

WPMA is a nonprofit corporation located on Saipan with its maritime offices and classrooms located at Northern Marianas Technical Institute in lower base. The academy will be offering a full suite of USCG-approved maritime courses and services to the seafaring public, the release stated.

For additional information about WPMA programs for the general public, or information on how to apply for a Merchant Mariner Credential, email Selina Taitano at staitano@wpma.net.