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## National Park Service News Release

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### Hawaiian Cemeteries Get a Helping Hand

Kalaupapa, HI – Kalaupapa has been described as a natural fortress. With pounding seas on two sides and a three thousand foot cliff separating it from the island of Molokai on the other; it was an obvious choice when King Kamehameha V isolated infected Hawaiians here starting in the 1880's. Since then more than 8000 people have died at Kalaupapa. Because of this dark history the current patients and park staff feel that the park's cemeteries are among their most important historical features. Many times this is the only remaining trace we have of these "lost" family members.

On June 1, 2016 thirty five students and professionals from around the Hawaiian Islands and the Pacific Rim gathered at Kalaupapa National Historical Park (KALA) to learn the art of cemetery preservation. This 10 day intense hands-on field school titled "Grave Marker Preservation and Lime Mortar Workshop" was the brain child of Richard Miller (Exhibit Specialist at KALA) a career mason and historic preservationist. Miller along with Carrie Mardorf (Chief of Cultural Resources, KALA), and Jason Church (Materials Conservator, NCPTT) organized the workshop to include a mix of preservation lectures and field work.

The workshop started with talks on the unique history and resources of Kalaupapa National Historical Park. The park is the home of the Hawaiian Island's Hansen's Disease colony. To train the park's historic preservation staff and workshop participants, KALA turned to the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT). NCPTT's Jason Church along with James "Rusty" Brenner (Texas Cemetery Restoration) joined Richard Miller in leading the workshop's field sessions that ranged from invasive vegetation removal techniques, to lime stuccoing of lava rock tombs.

Over the entire workshop participants completed the preservation of nine tombs and cleaned or did small repairs to a dozen more. The focus of the work however was not to try and complete preservation projects but to train and teach the importance of historic cemeteries to the local preservation students and professionals. For example professor Kerri Inglis brought a group of students from University of Hawaii, Hilo to the workshop. These students plan to develop a cemetery care and documentation program on their home island of Hawaii.

"This workshop provided an invaluable study into the ingenuity and consideration required to address the technical challenges specific to preservation in such an isolated environment, while using the limited resources and materials that are readily available. More importantly, the experience

instilled a deeper understanding for how to honor the lives, legacy, and values of the people of Kalaupapa.” Trina Evensen, Preservation Architect in Honolulu and workshop participant.



Figure 1: Workshop participants at the cemetery on the last day.



Figure 2: KALA Historic Preservation staff learns to limewash during the workshop.



Figure 3: Workshop participants apply a lime stucco a tomb made of stacked lava rock.

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