



(Right) Mandy Martinez, archeologist, screens for artifacts at the discovered site in Dona Ana. Martinez who previously dug in Mesoamerica in the Mayan region said this was her first time digging in the southwest. She said pueblos are rare and it was great to have the opportunity to dig here.



# Archeological site unearthed

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domestic activity type things, such as a ground stone artifact used for food processing. These rooms usually have more ritual type objects and less utilitarian type artifacts.

So far they have found hearths, ground stone and an assortment of prehistoric ceramics. They have also found evidence of various burned beams, which according to some theories were set on fire by the tribes before they abandoned them — it might have a ritual or catastrophic event.

“We have even found in one of the rooms what appears to be cash,” said Knight.

Knight said a large percentage of the Joronada

Mogollon is contained on Fort Bliss and White Sands Missile Range.

“We are one of the primary core areas for the Joronada Mogollon culture. We have a giant archeological research laboratory between the two installations,” said Knight.

According to Knight, the fall of the Joronada Mogollon was probably in 1450 A.D. The primary theory for the demise of the tribe was there may have been an extensive drought during that time period causing the group to move.

Another theory is other groups were moving into the area such as the Monzo, Zuma, Jcome, possibly the Tarahumara, and some Apache groups that raided the Joronada Mogollon. This may have contributed to the disruption of the Joronada Mogollon culture.

“The pit-houses that we are finding were dug half into the ground and half above the surface level. They may have been seasonal or periodically used and they are sort pits excavated partially into the ground. They were found during some backhoe trenching out in the area. We will have to do some testing before they turn up and eventually excavations as well. We are still developing a sampling strategy for that,” said Knight.

The site is not open to the public due to safety issues such as live artillery and convoy exercises. According to Knight they will provide opportunities for public visits in the future.

Knight said they will produce reports, which will have complete maps, photographs and detailed descriptions of everything unearthed. The artifacts will be collected and kept in the Fort Bliss curation facility. Researchers are encouraged to visit the facility and analyze the data to use in their own research. They will be available check out the artifacts and get copies of the reports.

“The main thing I want people to understand



Mike Stowe, archeologist, uses a global positioning system that keys into several satellites and gives an exact location on the earth within 10 cm.



Brian Knight points to a discovered metate believed to have been left by the Joronada Mogollon tribe.

Myles Miller, principal archeologists, Geo Marine Inc., holds a piece of a broken unearthed pottery bowl.



is that we have a lot of rich archeological resources out here. We are probably providing some of the best research that is being done in the west Texas and southern New Mexico area. Sometimes there is a perception that because we are on a military base the evidence is being damaged and written off, and that is absolutely not the case. It is important for the public to know that the military is doing a very fine job in protecting our cultural patrimony,” said Knight.