

Mound Site Evaluations at NAS Pensacola

Escambia County, Florida



Above: The crew (left to right: Joanna Rotchford, Steve Lotti, David Lineberry, and John O'Donnell) take a break while excavating a 2x2 meter unit near Mound 4 at the NAS Pensacola Golf Course.

CLIENT

US Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District

In February 2001, Brockington carried out an archaeological investigation of an important late Pre-Contact Indian archaeological site at the Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola. The site had been recorded prior to our survey of the area for the US Navy, but it was not recognized as being so large and as having several mounds as the central site feature. Luckily, this site lies entirely within the famous A. C. Read Golf Course and had been spared destruction during initial golf course construction. Our work was designed to determine very precisely the extent of the site and the importance of the various areas so that improvements to the course could be carefully planned and the site preserved in place.

Our study focused on determining the depths of cultural deposits in various areas of the site and investigating the nature of the mound-like landforms. Subsurface excavations were placed in the base of each of the potential mounds. Test units produced large quantities of ceramics and stone tools, along with a number of shell beads. A large circular feature of dark brown sand was encountered at the base of one of the units. Our on-site physical anthropologist identified this feature as a grave. Four of the mounds in the complex were also likely mortuary features. The presence of a probable burial mound complex and an identified human grave led the station to begin intensive consultation with Native American nations that once lived in or near the area.

Brockington hosted several face-to-face meetings between tribal leaders and representatives as well as NAS officials, and planners allowed full understanding of everyone's needs and concerns.

This site has the potential for addressing very specific research questions concerning Native American cultures in northwest Florida. The golf course improvements were redesigned to meet these needs and concerns, and the groups developed long-term working relationships.

ELEMENTS

Tribal Consultation
Archaeological investigations