



The grin of a prospector who just found gold!



Detectorists diligently searching for treasure during an organized hunt.

IT FINALLY HAPPENED!

I FOUND A GOLD NUGGET WITH MY METAL DETECTOR

BY STEPHEN PATTERSON

If you're still huntin' your very first gold nugget, this one's for you! My wife and I packed up our rowdy bunch along with the Southern Relics team and headed out west to Congress, Arizona, to the LDMA Stanton camp last April. This wasn't our first rodeo, mind you. This was our second time putting on a Digger's Detector Training at Stanton, and after our first event we were itching to do it again. These aren't your typical hunts; they're tailored to teach folks how to be true metal detecting experts and we really love doing it!

On top of all the in-field education that participants get, they also walk away with lots of goodies, and most everyone wins some great metal detecting gear. Nokta Detection Technologies came through as our main sponsor and has been doing so for the last couple of years for us. They were mighty generous giving away some of their top-notch gear, and one of our lucky hunters even walked away with a Nokta Simplex! They also had one of their brand new Gold Finder 2000s up for grabs!

But let me tell you, it's not just about the swag and the giveaways. What truly warms our souls is the people we meet at these hunts. As you can imagine traveling from one coast to the other,

we run into A LOT of members on the road. We've crossed paths with some real characters, all with the same passion for treasure huntin' as we have. They're a bunch of kind-hearted souls who lift each other up and cheer on every find like it's a gold rush.

And let me tip my hat to the caretakers at these camps; they're the real unsung heroes. They do so much to keep the properties looking great and do a wonderful job to bring the fun during each event. Take Carl and Kathy at Stanton, for example. They run that campground like a well-oiled machine, and they make every guest feel right at home on the range. We couldn't find better folks to connect with during our adventures — their hospitality is top-notch.

You want to know more about that gold nugget I found, don't you?

Well, let me paint a picture of day one. The sun was high in the sky, and the desert air was filled with the sounds of detectors beeping everywhere. But the real thrill came during the organized hunts — we had a trick up our sleeves. We planted several silver coins all around to be found, and whoever found one got to keep it as their prize. Trust me, you've never seen happier faces than

those clutchin' their silver treasures like they'd hit the jackpot.

Now, on day two of the event Carl led the way, taking all of us to an old claim near the campground that was once a mine carved out by some miners in the late 1800s into the early 1900s. Everyone was excited to have the chance to find a desert gold nugget with their newly acquired detecting skills and knowledge.

As for me, I was armed with my trusty Nokta Gold Kruzer in Boost mode. This is the perfect mode that handles the rough and tumble of the Arizona gold fields, and it provides more depth compared to some of the other modes on that machine (Fast/Micro).

Once in Boost mode, I didn't fuss with any other settings. I just gave it a good ground balance, and off I went swinging my coil over some of the tailing piles just outside the mine shaft.

The Arizona heat had already set in that day, and it is no joke! We were all quickly reminded that unless you're well hydrated, the desert will win — so folks make sure you're stocked with plenty of water!

I was weaving my coil in and around some prickly pear cacti, finding a few bits of metal along the way — bullet casings and tiny pieces of wire, you know, the usual. After about 30 minutes of swinging, I stopped for a water break near a cactus. Taking in the desert scenery, I snapped some pictures of my detector with

the cactus. And then, just as I gathered my gear to continue swinging, I heard it — the sweet beep of the Gold Kruzer!

The VDI on the screen said 34, and I knew I was on something good. With my plastic scoop in hand, I carefully gathered some soil and gave it a wave over the coil. And wouldn't you know it, it gave me that "zip-zip" sound only a prospector knows! Whatever it was, I had it in the scoop! I shook the scoop to move the material around inside, and that's when I saw that bright, beautiful, gold shining back at me! I couldn't help but holler out to everyone who was nearby: "I got a piece of gold!" The gang came a-runnin' and I picked it up and just admired it.

As I marveled over it for a few minutes, I noticed that it resembled the shape of an apple. I was floatin' on cloud nine and just had to go share the joy and excitement with everyone out there! One gentleman had a scale, so we weighed it and it tipped the scales at a plump 1.3 grams!

Now, you might think finding gold like that would rile up some jealousy, and you'd be right. The other two Southern Relics guys, my buddies Chris and Jake, were just a tad envious of my treasure. But more than that, it fired 'em up with even more motivation to find a nugget of their own.

That little picker found a special place now on my shelf with my all-time best metal detecting finds at home!



Group photo at Stanton camp after the event ended



Jake looking for that AU with the Nokta Gold Finder 2000



The 1.3-gram gold nugget found with the Nokta Gold Kruzer



Detectorists meeting at the Opera House

The Southern Relics team
(left to right: Stephen, Chris, Jake)



And guess what? I wasn't the only lucky one that day! Another fella snagged a small gold nugget too. It was a day full of adventure, thrill, and rush of discovery.

I've used a lot of detectors over the years, learning and growing with every new technology release. And while each detector has its strengths, I'm so happy with my Nokta Gold Kruzer — it came through like a champ!

At the beginning of 2023, we got some disappointing news that Nokta announced they were discontinuing the Gold Kruzer. But the success stories of the Gold Kruzer from users around the world changed their minds! That, paired with its waterproof capabilities, Nokta has decided to continue its full production. So, if you're huntin' for a great VLF gold detector, the Gold Kruzer will do a great job finding those nuggets. And because it gives a VDI readout of the detected target, the Gold Kruzer isn't just a one-trick pony, it's great for relic and coin hunting too!

I'm truly grateful to the LDMA for opening up their properties and allowing Southern Relics to host these fantastic detector events — and, man, do we have some epic plans for this fall 2023.

First up, we've got a Hunt and Training event at the LDMA Vein Mountain camp comin' at ya on Sept. 28-30. Mark your calendars and start packing; you're not gonna want to miss it!

We will be giving away at least one metal detector and trust me, there'll be a whole lotta SWAG and prizes for the takin'! It's gonna be a great time.

Hang on, there's more in store! On Oct. 28, we're throwin' a one-day Relic and Silver Hunt at the LDMA Loud Mine Gold Camp in Cleveland, Georgia! This is going to be one big detector hunt with LOTS of silver, relics and foreign coins just waiting to be found. And you know us, we'll be spreadin' the joy like wildfire with tons of detecting gear to give away.

As for me and my bunch, we hope to see you there! Until next time.

Stephen Patterson is an LDMA member and co-founder of Southern Relics, based in South Carolina. He has been metal detecting and gold prospecting for eight years.

SCAN THIS QR CODE TO WATCH THE HIGHLIGHT VIDEO OF THE GOLD NUGGET FUN!

