

GOLD
PROSPECTORS



GOLD **PROSPECTORS**

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WHAT ARE THE ODDS?

FIELD TEST
DOC'S DETECTING SUPPLY

HEART OF GOLD
A SURVIVOR'S JOURNEY

**GOLD AND
GEOPOLITICS**

WILLOUGHBY GOLD MINE
LDMA ACCESS GRANTED



EDUCATION
**WHERE'S
THE GOLD?**

PAGE 6



I do not believe in luck when it comes to detecting. I truly believe in the adage,

“Luck Favors the Prepared.”

In all my metal detecting I am prepared and kitted with the right gear, the best research and a drive to be successful over depending on or hoping for random luck.

—K.H.

**SWING,
SCOOP,
SPRING
& SAGA**

**DOC'S ARSENAL
OF GOLD
GRABBING GEAR**
BY KEVIN HOAGLAND



Innovation is what drives the prospecting and mining industry and has for well over a hundred years. Sometimes innovation is based on a new product that promises to revolutionize the industry or taking something that we know and just flat out making it better than it was ever before.

In the case of Doc's Detecting Supply, both are true. Doc over the years has introduced everything from small lightweight battery alternatives for big pulse induction metal detectors to revisualizing then reinventing something as common as the scoop that we all have at least one of.

To me, Doc's approach to everything he invents or reinvents is in my words, "Stuff that keeps me in the field longer, swinging my detector better." That's a pretty wide statement and might even be a bit vague, but it is a statement that I have stood behind since the 1990s when I first met Doc and began using his gear.

This is a breakdown and review of each piece of Doc's gear that is in my kit that I use and why this gear is important to me and so many others that Doc, in some cases, has given them back the ability to continue being out there swinging a detector and finding gold.

Let's start with a simple item that I mentioned above, the scoop. Now the plastic scoop has been around for decades, and I have at least a dozen or

more of them. It's a scoop, nothing special about it at all, and that is where the simple scoop has been reinvented by Doc to make it an essential part of detecting.

Gold Pit™

The Gold Pit was designed and created by Doc for detectorists because of the changes in the metal detecting industry. Companies are creating machines that find gold so small that it causes us to reclassify what is considered a nugget in size and weight. What used to be a small picker barely heard by a detector is now a ripping signal, and gold that was invisible to a detector just a few years ago now gives solid repeatable signals that you must dig. With that comes a lot of info and power being sent out by the detector as well, so much so that most of us cannot get away from setting off our detectors by something as simple as passing our hands across the coil.



Here is why the Gold Pit shines in a market flooded with scoops, it's the PIT. The Gold Pit is a scoop with a drop bottom just like a gold pan. That is where (with about 3 minutes of practice) you're the gold nugget that you just dug up will live and, like a gold pan, it is really hard to get the gold to go away unless you are just panning the scoop with too much vim and vinegar for us older folks and exuberance for the younger crowd. There is a great video on using the Gold Pit, which I will link to at the end of this review, for much more than what may have been its original design. I have several different uses for the Gold Pit. When I am in a new area and want to do some very small testing for mineralization trends and gold, I find that I am using the Gold Pit over carrying a pan with me almost all the time now. When I walk into a new area to test, I have three or four tools with me: pick, crevice tool, hydration pack and the Gold Pit. There is little that I cannot do with this kit setup, and it is working out very nicely for me. Side note: the Gold Pit works very well as a tiny gold pan, wet or dry, because of its unique design.

For detecting it is a must-have for me. Using the newest technologies in detecting as I described above, the Gold Pit is one of two scoops that I carry all the time and you should, too. I cannot pass my hand over many of the detectors that I use without creating a good signal (guess my vitamins are working out well, and my left arm has a lot of metal installed) that in many cases masks a smaller signal. Two scoops are not a new idea to me; because of my arm it is something that I have been doing for years. Where the Gold Pit excels is that in moving material from scoop to scoop over scoop to hand, I do not get any false signals, and when I have the nugget in the Pit, it is easy

to recover or, as I so often do, verify that there is a small piece of gold in the Pit and then drop it all into my pouch and get back to swinging the coil; I'll pan it out when I get home. Detect, dig, verify, dump, repeat. That alone has saved me hours in the last year. In closing out the importance of having two scoops and at least one of them being the Gold Pit think of this, I have with one detector found over 400 pieces of gold, and the total weight is just under an ounce. When you think about the time it takes to recover the smallest of dinks and have more swing time, it is hard to argue the Gold Pit's value, design and importance.

Ultra Swingy Thingy

I am not sure if I was an early adopter or one of the first to get a Swingy Thingy so many years ago when Doc first introduced the rig to detectorists. No matter, though. I have had every incarnation of the Swingy Thingy since then and it is a tool that I do not and cannot go without. So, what is the Swingy Thingy, you ask? Simply put, it is a padded support harness system that is lightweight, easy to use, that has been the difference between a six-hour detecting day and an eight-plus-hour detecting day for me.

It is a simple design that, like a pair of suspenders, snap-locks onto your belt, or in my case a military-style belt that I also have my pouch, pick holder and scoops attached to. OK, that sounds kinda cool, but where is the specialty of Swingy Thingy? It is in the name: "Swingy" is Doc's constant play on words for a tool that utilizes a bungee system that takes all the weight of the

detector off you and is adjustable to help you keep your coil on the ground and flat the way it should be to be a successful detectorist.

I know all of this sounds simple and it really seems that way, yet there were a lot of thoughts and different versions before the original Swingy Thingy made its way into detectorists' hands. Since the first unit launched, Doc very carefully and purposely took everything, including feedback from users, into consideration then he created the Ultra Swingy Thingy.

The way that the Ultra Swingy Thingy works is that the harness distributes the weight of the detector across the harness system to eliminate the felt weight of any detector attached to the rig, and I mean any detector. Couple that with a proper swing and slight push on the bungee, and you have a system that removes all the upper body fatigue (everything from the waist up and through the neck). That has allowed me to spend more hours detecting. More time with less fatigue equals more gold.

The Ultra Swingy Thingy has changed the lives of many detectorists, including myself. In my travels I work with a great deal of GPAA members in the field with Gold Trails. When I see a member using the Ultra Swingy Thingy, I will make it a point to ask them "Why?" and the number one response is that they suffer from back or neck issues and the rig allows them to continue their passion for detecting. I asked this question to one member, and she was almost in tears sharing with me that she had been badly injured when a driver ran a red light and hit her broadside in the driver's door. As she healed over time, she thought that she would have to give up beach detecting, which is her passion. She learned of the Ultra Swingy Thingy

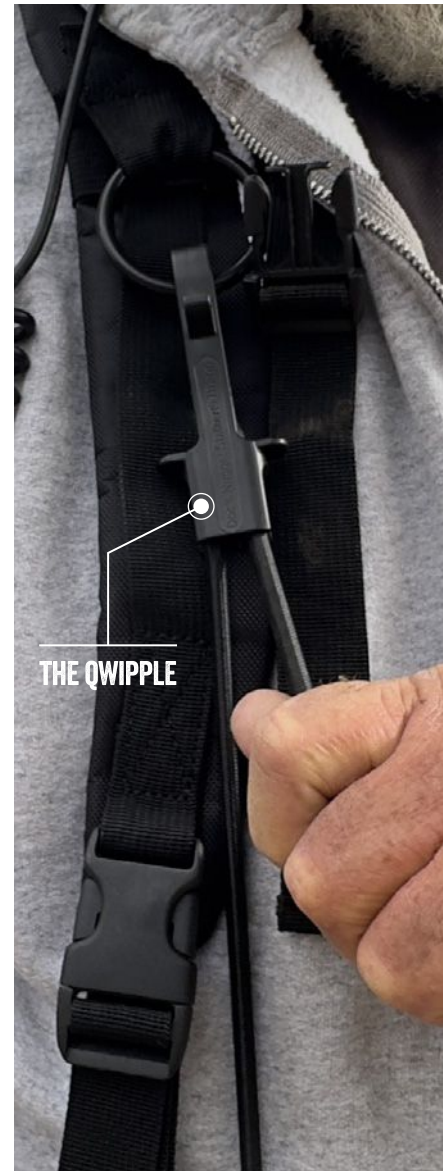
from another member and said, and I quote, "It gave me back my passion for detecting." For myself, I have gotten older and some of my old injuries like to come back and haunt me from time to time, and using the Ultra Swingy Thingy keeps me in the game.

There is a lot more to the Ultra Swingy Thingy than staying in the game. When I am detecting, the rig helps me in maintaining the ground level of my coil. Meaning that when I have the bungee dialed in, I can run my detector with not a great deal of pushing and releasing the bungee attached to the detector. When I need to drop the coil into a low spot I push down until I feel the bungee resist more and then alter my swing to always keep the coil on the ground. When I hit a small rise, the bungee releases tension and I can adjust the bungee for the changing ground (which I will do if I am going up the side of a hill). If it is small mound, I will just make a physical adjustment to the riser then go back to minimum tension when I am back on the flat.

A true benefit for me is that by taking all the weight off me I can use anything from the heaviest detector out there, now coming in at 7.23 lbs., to the lightest detector, coming in around 2.94 lbs. I understand that 2.94 lbs. doesn't sound like a lot of weight, but try to swing that coil for hours on end and even 2.94 lbs. will begin to feel like a brick on a stick in a few hours' time. Again, for me, more time in the field always equals more gold.

The Qwipple™

This is the perfect place to introduce another new product from Doc: The Qwipple™. If you already have any of the Swingy Thingies, from stan-





dard to Ultra, or use a backpack that has chest loops or D rings on the padded shoulder straps and you want even more control of your detector, get a Qwipple. Doc has come up with a few different designs of bungee systems in the past, including the Qweegle, which had been my favorite because of the quick adjustability until the Qwipple. I know, too many Q words, especially ones that are not qu. I have no idea where Doc comes up with these names and frankly, I'm afraid to ask.

As a side note, if you have a pack that you love that does not have loops or D rings, one D ring and tab comes in the package to sew onto your favorite pack.

Something as simple as a bungee system, I know, doesn't sound like a must-have product. After all, it's just a bungee, right? No, it is not. In Doc's never-ending quest to make detecting easier, more productive, longer field and, let's face it, less painful, a bungee is not just a bungee — it is a core item.

What makes the Qwipple stand out is that Doc took a great deal of feedback from detectorists using bungee systems and figured out how to make one thing about bungees better: he worked with a manufacturer to make a cord to his specifications with less stretch, 50% less to be exact, and tough as nails. The cord is a marine-grade, UV-protected Dacron polyester shock cord. What does that mean to us as detectorists? First off, with less stretch from the cord the bungee takes a lot less of my energy to push the coil (stretching), and the return from the stretch is less aggressive, which instantly gives me more precise coil control. As I shared above regarding the Ultra Swingy Thingy, I can manipulate the detector using the bungee system

to always be on the ground and keeping it there. Now I can do that better with the Qwipple.

I wished I had used the Qwipple from the beginning of testing these products, but I wanted to use each one separately over building kit. My results with the Qwipple were excellent after I realized how much difference the 50% stretch really makes in control of the coil. I think a good FYI is needed here. If you are running another type of bungee system, be prepared to get used to not using as much force as you have with other systems. That was my issue right out of the gate; I ran the Qwipple exactly as my motor memory told me to and that was too much for the Qwipple. In fact, what I found was that I could run the Qwipple perfectly with well below half the muscle energy I was using the day before with better results in detector management on all the detectors I used for these tests.

Another factor as to why this is now my bungee system of choice is that all other systems that I have used or seen mostly took two hands to operate properly or to dial in. The Qwipple is different. There is a thumb/pull slot lock on the ambidextrous hook that after a few tries I got to the point where I could get a perfect height adjustment then if needed and only when needed make a fine tune. After a couple of days and a few different detectors, I found I was using the top hook thumb release over any other adjustment point with one hand and getting any of the detectors spot on for the ground I was swinging a coil over.

I know that there are a lot of thoughts about a piece of shock cord, I agree. Yet as I shared in the beginning, "Luck Favors the Prepared." Coil control is learned; there is no luck involved.

SAGA™ Guide Arm

I saved the most impressive product for last from Doc that flat out surprised me: the SAGA guide arm. I know that Doc does ultimately call the SAGA a swing arm; for this, however, I am not using swing arm in describing the SAGA. I do not want the SAGA to be confused with a regular swing arm.

I also want it to be on the record and to be very clear here: I DO NOT LIKE SWING ARMS. My reason for disliking swing arms can be summed up in two words: "They break." Actually, I have more than two words on this that I'll include below with more detail; right now I'm on a rant.

I believe that arms could offer a massive advantage in detecting by offering unmatched user comfort, eliminating a great deal of strain on the body, along with giving, when combined with a bungee system, the ultimate in coil control. Unfortunately, the industry has lacked, in my opinion, creating an arm that offers everything I just wrote. Plus, something that I must treat like an egg in the field is just junk to me.

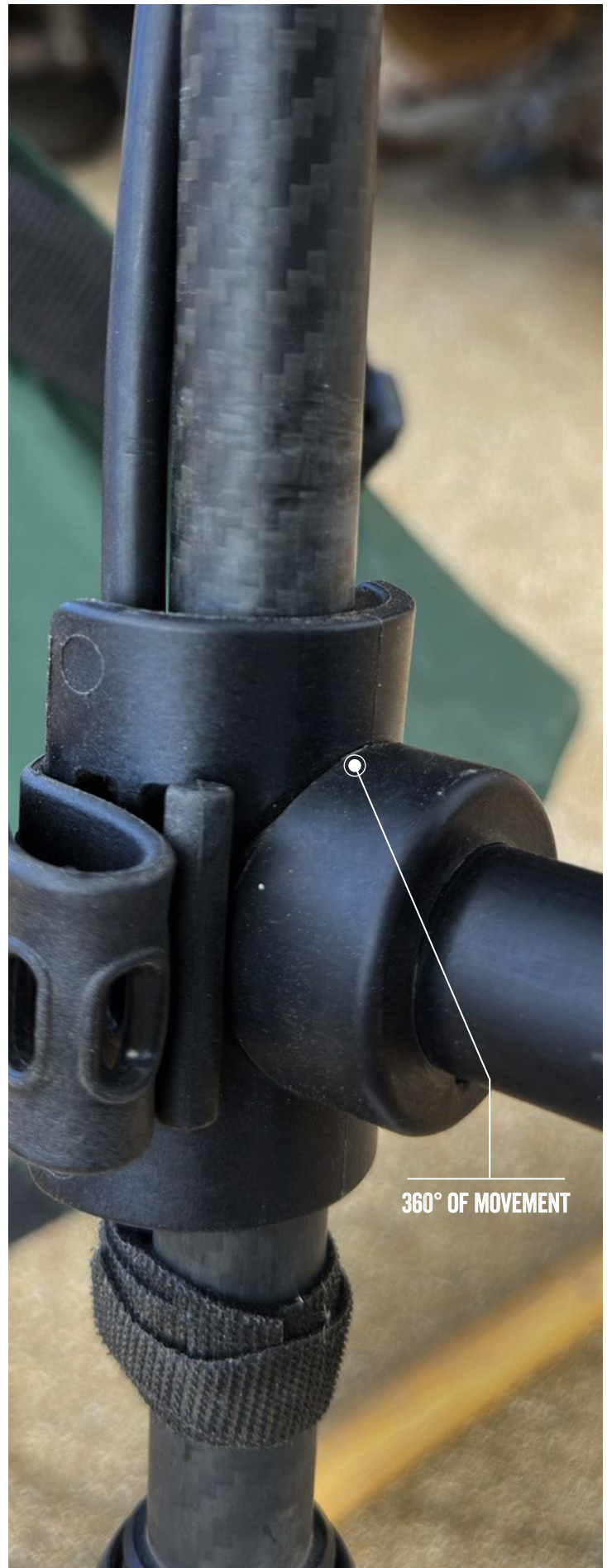
The issue where I see the failure with swing arms is this: they are designed to be used on a horizontal plane and nothing else. As soon as you decide to detect a side wall in a wash or if you are standing on a rapid decline and you must run your coil at any angle other than horizontal while you remain vertical and without having to be a contortionist, the connecting point of the arm to the main shaft snaps and you are left holding a rod. In my case when this happened on a rather steep slope in the California Motherlode, I was left holding a broken rod as I tumbled down a mountainside. At least I had the foresight to let go of my detector instead of having it bouncing down the side with me. There are also those of us who use our detectors in hardrock mines where we are working. The options have always been to short-shaft your detector, tuck it under your arm to be able to use it vertically or bend your body in ways that it is not meant to bend. This is detecting, not Hot Yoga.

While others made little changes to swing arms and some just quit making swing arms altogether, Doc as usual took a different road. He worked the problem and came up with an outstanding guide arm that allows me to not only remain vertical and swing a coil on a vertical face, but I can also do so without having to position my body in awkward angles or risk breaking the arm connection off the detector. I experimented with the SAGA by taking it so far as to go 360 degrees while detecting an opening with the coil flat to all the surfaces. Aside from making an adjustment with my right arm, which is in the detector's arm cuff, it worked flawlessly, even inverted. Not something I would recommend doing but I had to try to break the SAGA, after all that's why I test stuff.

Doc's solution to the problem was to create a pivot point where the guide arm couples to the detector shaft. It may not sound like a huge fix, but it was enough that it confounded others. Doc in typical Doc style worked the problem and the result is a guide arm that I can, with the twist of my left wrist, go from horizontal to vertical with no stress to my wrist or to my body. It is a natural movement that I described to a friend as turning a key in a lock.

My faith is renewed with the SAGA guide arm not breaking its mounting points and holding up in some uses well outside of what any reasonable detectorist would attempt. This is why I think everyone should have a SAGA, especially if you own multiple detectors ranging anywhere from the Minelab GPZ 7000 at almost 8 lbs. to the XP ORX Gold and its whopping-light 1lb., 14oz. I don't care if a detectorist, or even I, look funny using one; looks do not matter to me when I have complete control of my detector.

The design of the SAGA allows you to fit it to every detector that I can think of no matter the shaft shape or size without changing the performance dynamics of the SAGA at all. I have used the SAGA on everything from the square shaft of the Minelab SDC-2300, triangle/trapezoid of the Garrett Axion, the massive Minelab GPZ 7000 and of course any round shaft detector there is. And no, I did not have to have a few optional or even included pieces of gear to make it fit all my detectors. Fitment is a single strap that can be used two ways to assure that the SAGA fits every detector I have tried so far.



The SAGA Arm's flexibility eliminates awkward detecting angles.



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Staying with fitment, the SAGA package contains everything needed to get up and running in a minute or so. The only tool that may be needed and that is up to you is cutting the handle to fit your reach length. I may in the long run cut my SAGA rod, but not until I have used it on all my detectors and find that sweet spot that works across all my machines.

The lower pivot section is completely assembled, ready to install, and includes a little card that lets you know that the melted bolt is not a defect. Place the lower unit on to the detector's shaft and use the rubber strap to secure the pivot joint to the detector. There are two ways to use the strap to fit all detectors and there are directions on the assembly card to secure to large and regular detector shafts. From there, follow the instructions. It took me about a minute to get the SAGA ready to go and of course I didn't read the instructions until I had the SAGA installed. It's intuitive. I will add this, do not glue the egg to the handle until you know if you are going to cut the shaft or not.

In a nutshell this is why I feel that every detectorist should be using a SAGA. Before I go any further, though, I am going to clearly share in my opinion the differences between a swing arm and the SAGA guide arm. Swing arms, as I shared before, work on the horizontal plane, anything beyond that requires the detectorist to force the arm into differing positions. This equated to putting more strain on the unit itself, many times resulting in a broken arm, not to mention the extra strain on the user's body. The SAGA as a guide arm gives me complete control of my swing, either horizontal or vertical, and with the pivot point working with me and not against me it feels natural to me. Here are the two issues the SAGA solved:

1. Control of the detector. By using two hands working together equally to naturally control the movement of a detector, it assures that the coil is always where it should be, on the surface wearing out the coil cover. It is also easier to establish and maintain a proper and continuous coil speed. If you think about it, when you use both sides of your body in unison, this is the greatest level of control in and around the repetitive motions. Both sides regulate the actions of the other. Most of the time you won't know its going on. It's just a natural thing to do. Think of it as walking with your arms swinging as you walk. It is a natural movement that we seldom give any thought to.

2. Physical fatigue. Even with using a unit like the Ultra Swingy Thingy there is always going to be a bit of additional stress on body areas; swinging your shoulder out of sync and neck stress can make your day of detecting shorter than you may want. By using the SAGA in conjunction with the Swingy Thingy, I have had a few days where I decided it was time to go home versus my body telling me it was time to quit. One day was when my legs were just tired and wanted to go home after swinging the GPZ 7000 for almost eight hours. Another was 10 hours with two detectors, the Axiom and the 24K.

Final thoughts

After testing these four products, I have to say that all are winners, and each is gear that goes into my kit. Admittedly, I have been using the Ultra Swingy Thingy and the Gold Pit scoop for some time now, but the addition of the Qwipple and now the SAGA will better outfit me for those long or even short trips into the field. Having complete control and not suffering fatigue and pain is what keeps me out there longer swinging a coil and finding gold.

Final, final thought

Doc and I have been friends for decades, and he clearly knew my thoughts on swing arms and my complete aversion to them over the years. Had the SAGA not proven itself to me, he knew that I would be brutally honest in my review. I must give Doc a lot of credit for having a level of assurance to even ask me to look at the SAGA, let alone test it and ultimately add it to my kit.

Doc's Detecting Supply is a full line dealer for many of the top names in the prospecting industry along with Doc's creations. Everything that Doc carries is designed to help you to become better. Doc's mission statement and credo are simple, "Helping adventure seekers in their quest to find gold and treasure since 1992" sums it up and leaves no ifs, ands or buts about what he does and his commitment to you.

Scan this QR code to see a video
of Doc's products in the field!

