

What is it with Detecting and Camouflage?



By the American
Detecting Diva –
Allyson Cohen

I was rearranging my wardrobe for yet another change of season in New England when a pile of once neatly folded pants tumbled down from the top shelf, onto my head, and subsequently the floor.

As I bent down to retrieve and refold them, the pattern of digital camouflage caught my eye. I reached for the khaki hue with a smile on my face and began to recall some of the detecting trips I've had in the past few years; Civil War searches in Virginia, West Virginia and Maryland; Farm field forays in Long Island ... they all happened while I was wearing my beloved camouflage pants.

This got me thinking – what is it about detecting and camouflage?
When I started in the hobby, I barely noticed the camouflage (or *camo*) fashion trend.

Seas of green and brown

I think my eyes began to open up to it about the time I attended my first organised detecting rally to be greeted by a sea of folks milling about in swathes of green, grey, khaki and brown. To me, the group looked more like a game hunting party than a group of detectorists.

I'm not a stranger to camo. In the past decade or so it seems to be the norm for the younger generation to wear it as everyday fashion. I raised three boys who were never in the military, yet owned a vast array of camouflage clothing. It's also not uncommon to see the occasional construction worker or military veteran out and about in a pair of camo pants or wearing a camo jacket. So unless focused on it, a person may not give it a second thought.

Before camo's new popularity, I attended a fair in New York with friends. The husband, a Vietnam

Veteran, was wearing his usual attire, camo pants and T-shirt, but I hardly noticed. However, I was shocked when his wife jumped down out of their truck also clad in similar pants. I went numb with embarrassment from the realisation I would have to be seen walking around all day with this couple.

Conspicuous in New York

Had I still been living in Tennessee, this would not have been such a problem. The southern folk embraced camo gear early on, and it would have been possible for the couple to blend in more easily. As the day progressed, it became evident that they were rather conspicuous in New York. They stood out like a sore thumb and I still cringe at the memory!

However, fast forward to today, and after receiving a pair as a gift from a detecting friend, my opinion

has changed. Being a practical girl by nature, and after experiencing the utilitarian practicality of these trousers first hand, I now embrace them as my clothing of choice in the field.

Few women care to don them and for good reasons I suppose. There is nothing feminine about them. So, unless they are worn by a sexy fashion model or highlighted in a torrid music video by frenetic male dancers, they have little fashion appeal.

What they lack in style is made up for with their features. Besides the obvious ability to provide camouflage, their usefulness in detecting is epic. The best feature being the huge pockets, resembling pouches on each side of the leg. Just two of these pockets will fit a water bottle, mobile phone, keys, extra batteries, protein bars, probe, lip balm and finds! In addition there are six more pockets to spare. The

creator of these trousers was a true genius!

They have a button fly and drawstring at the waist for a custom fit, although after a long lazy winter, the usefulness is suspect. There are also strings at the bottom of each leg that can be tied according to your needs. Most people cut them off after tripping on them, but I haven't come across this problem. I guess all those ballet lessons paid off – *thanks Mom!*

Tough as heck but does nothing for your shape

Another great feature is that these pants are tough as heck. They are the only trousers you can crash through the briars without getting torn up. Trust me on that. They take on any abuse your terrain has to offer. As a matter of fact, the only thing that has torn a hole in my camo's was the barbed wire fencing I met up with. They wash well, and the only staining I couldn't remove was the red mud I got covered in while at *Diggin' in Virginia*.

Where safety is concerned, it can be an advantage wearing camouflage at some less than desirable sites due to its association with the military. The look makes you appear tougher, and people tend to avoid you. It is also helpful if you don't want to be seen by passers-by while searching in a particular area. That said, it can also make you a target for illegal animal hunters up in their tree stands, so be aware.

Whatever country you live in, practice good judgment and don't wear your camo while walking into tot lots (children's playgrounds), or near schools. Well meaning folk may think your detector is a shotgun slung across your shoulder and phone the authorities.

A note to the ladies if considering purchasing a pair: A disadvantage to donning camo pants is that they do nothing for your shape. The colour scheme, usually entailing khaki (is that even a colour?), has the ability to make even the smallest person look larger. Not a feature most women look for when purchasing pants. If you're a bit thick in the thighs like myself, the large pockets will make you look even larger. The same applies to the rear view. These pants are designed for men, so don't be alarmed if you have to size up. Men's pants are sized by the waist, not the hips. In other words, it doesn't mean you're fat.

And a note to the guys, please don't take offence, but it's not appropriate to wear mis-matching woody patterned camo jackets with digital patterned pants. It confuses the wildlife, and is akin to wearing stripes with plaid.

All in all, I have to say camo pants are worth the price of the small investment. For this reason, I am now the proud owner of a couple pairs.

