

## Overview of the Michael Yon Saga

| *"To sin by silence, when they should protest, makes cowards of men."* Abraham Lincoln?

I hope with this overview of the Michael Yon Saga, I can wash my hands of him. I have no doubt he'll try to spark new controversies, and there will always be a question of whether it is better to ignore the attention whore, or to apply the attention his bad behavior warrants. I didn't undertake this series lightly, but the record had to be corrected. I will not allow him to dictate my actions via bullying nor threats.

But Yon has an international audience, and by his own standard, he should be debunked.

Because I have ignored Yon for so many years, I was unaware of much of his behavior. I was surprised that he had banned Mary Ann, one of the most prolific volunteers in the very organization which he endorses. In my research I found out why: she had asked Yon, and another Journalist to correct a story that credited her for things she had not done. Consequently, it also had him playing the role of a hero, which he later admitted was nothing more than sending an email. While Yon eventually changed his story on his dispatches, he left the original intact elsewhere. *The Daily Mail* had picked up the story based on Yon's original, and emails with the author, and while it was corrected according to *The Daily Mail's* policies eventually, the linked source still contains some misperceptions.

Yon had demanded I research, and he also asked his fans to find my name, rank, and unit. The problem was and still is that his definition of research is reading his site and buying his book. He plastered his links all over BlackFive. But it was when I began getting emails from people Yon thought knew me, indicating he was bullying them, that I put some pressure on him. When he began interrogating good people on Facebook, I responded at his site. He certainly didn't seem to like what he had grabbed hold of, but he should understand that threats only embolden a Veteran, and bullying innocent bystanders is not an endearing trait.

But this isn't about me. In Yon's words, I'm just calling the ball where it fell. On the eve of what he would explode into an international incident, he was praising General McChrystal, and complaining that American Generals were commenting on the chances of the American Hockey Team in the Olympics. Hockey is not my bag, but that was a big game. I won't bemoan those that watched, particularly those that got a break from combat to do so, but evidently Hockey is something Yon hates. I don't know why, but it is. I didn't see any complaints from him that Troops watched the Super Bowl.

At any rate, long after the game had concluded, the Taliban attacked the Bridge Over The River Tarnak. To hear Yon tell it, a General was supposed to be guarding that bridge that night but instead had watched hockey. To hear Yon tell it, he broke the story, but he didn't. He commented on it in a link to the Australian press. It would be more than a week before Yon wrote up something on it. He'd later complain that the MSM didn't link to him or credit him, but the truth is that he couldn't even figure out who was responsible for security on the bridge that day, and he was on the headquarters post, with those Troops and Generals.

Nevertheless, he was too far down his chosen path to back off his claims. He would later claim to have broken the story of a Negligent Discharge by the same General. He didn't. Again he commented on links he made, to the Canadian Media and others, that had written about it. When General Menard was fired, Yon claimed he was to credit for it. He wasn't. General Menard was fired for an inappropriate affair, which Yon didn't know about.

It wouldn't be long before Yon was officially disembedded. The official reason was given that there were more Journalists applying for embeds, than there were slots for embeds. Yon had already been extended several times, and it was his turn to rotate out. Yon does not accept this reason, and frankly I expect there were other factors not included in the official reason. The reason is valid, and the Military invited him to re-apply for a future date, but the Military likes to sugar coat such things. They don't like to embarrass people. Yon tries to proclaim his innocence of other factors, while also denying the official reason. Gotta choose which one Yon.

Yon proclaimed that only General McChrystal could have made the decision, and that would be his next smear target. It sharply contrasted to the pre-Tarnak praise he had passed on about the General. This next battle would explode into attacks on the PAO's (Public Affairs Officers) and then into a full out brawl with MilBlogs. His site readership soared from 25% of his 2007 highs to 50% of those highs, before falling to below 10%. Controversy was the new name of his game. He alleged a conspiracy between Milbloggers and the staff of General McChrystal.

Yon's bravado soared. Spurned on by his fans, he claimed that he would go disembedded, that it would be safer, and allow him a special journalistic swagger. He was soon in Thailand and has been, through this writing, February 2010. Recent Facebook updates from him focus on Thai food, fish that chew on his feet, and dead bodies pictured floating down Burmese rivers, along with a video of him driving a scooter on sidewalks. Evidently, he was escorted, into, or near, Burma by Thai Security forces. His claims to be either on the verge of a new trip to Afghanistan, or to pending interviews with high level politicians didn't pan out, but were allowed to silently drift off into failing memories.

But Yon's readership numbers were dismal. He didn't like that I pointed that out when he was plastering his links all over BlackFive. It appears Yon was motivated to either boost readership with controversy or to establish the evidence for a lawsuit in his Black Five and Facebook exploits.

Yon has called me "dishonest," a "quack," a "milkook," and a "propagandist." Why? Because I told him that I didn't trust him to protect my back. Is this based on what I've written on War On Terror News or Perspectives? No, he states that he hasn't read the words here, though he did comment on ONE post. Unlike Yon, I won't delete and block those that dissent from my opinions. In fact, he was too lazy to even read the "About" page, or to find the site email address. His fans had to tell him (part of) what was there. In his comments here, he does not address the article or the issues involved, but if you want to earn the status "Banned by Yon," just link to a story here, and you'll last about 3 minutes on his FB page. (BTW: I find great irony in that his biggest supporter, Beth, won't tell him a thing about where her own family members are stationed.)

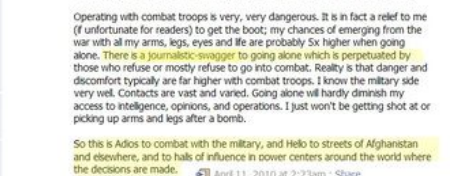
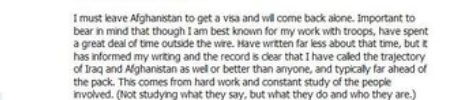
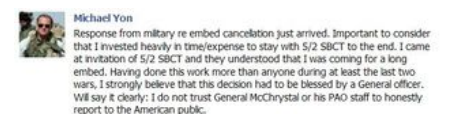
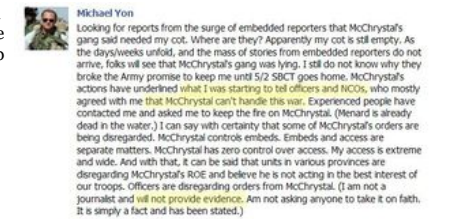
But Yon was not finished with his new controversies. He decided to attack a serving Soldier, who has been open about his battles with PTSD, and label that Soldier as insane. It was that event that made me realize that I could not sit on the sidelines. Until that point, I had hoped to have just the one post, explaining how I had been banned by Yon. It's not that CJ is unable to defend himself, but that he should not be left to fight the battle on his own. He has bravely laid his issues bare, for all to see, in hopes that it will help other Warriors in theirs; that it is not a sign of weakness, but one that can be overcome.

Within a day, Yon had gone on a serial banning spree. I was #14, according to his account, and soon there were 25 on his list, though I've documented that all he has banned, are not on his list.

Yon had challenged CJ, me, and all to find the OPSEC violations, he was alleged to have committed. We did. CJ posted a picture perfect example of all that should not be published, but **had been** published by Yon. A 1st Grader could understand why not to publish that kind of thing. But, when Yon finally acknowledged the post, he and his fans denied the implications. I didn't want to upstage CJ, but it needed more commentary. I had to spell it out for some. More were banned, without comment, others with comment, but his remark was that it was good advertising for him, and then that if he were guilty, so were those that pointed out that he was. Not only does he not understand OPSEC, but also not that time and actions change the pertinence of it. Instead of denying it was a valid example, he claimed he hadn't been charged with it by the Military. But then, he wouldn't know, since he hadn't read it, according to him.

How does Yon deal with anyone who questions his credibility, his actions, his motives, or his finances? He bans them. He calls them "dishonest," or a "milkook." Sometimes, he goes further with threats of lawsuits, or of their careers. Any person who quotes his detractors, has his or her reputation called into question, no matter if it's the MSM, a Military Organization, or an individual. It's blind belief in him, or banned by Yon.

Lately, Yon, has linked to the MSM reports, and his old reports without telling fans it wasn't him reporting live from the scene. At different times he has claimed that only being on the ground allows one to report, and at other times that only by stepping back can one see the full picture. It all depends on where he's at. Twice, he proclaimed that Mubarak had left Egypt, according to his high level sources. Yet, a week and a half later, Mubarak went on TV and explained he would not bow to foreign dictates, and would wait for the Egyptian



people to choose a new President before retiring in Egypt. Even when Mubarak did resign, he didn't leave the country. Sometimes, it's better to be 2nd or 5th with the story and to get it right than to proclaim "*Deuwy Wins*."

Yon learned that his Wiki Page is not as flattering as it once was. It seems that someone has added the current conflicts he is having with MilBlogs, and he doesn't like that the opposition to his claims of greatness have been cited. Not to worry, he has someone to look into that.

At the beginning of this, I had to ask myself if I should or should not "feed the dog?" I had to ask if this were personal, or if there were an underlying motivation? My goal was simply to expose a bully and his false claims. I found much worse things than I had expected. It wasn't simply that he has an abrasive personality, but that he was endangering Our Troops and attacking Our Allies. I won't ask anyone to not read *any* military site, but readers need to know what to look for when they see false allegations and know what not to re-publicize (OPSEC violations), but rather to report it to those that can fix it. (Military command.)

Yon has stated that Milbloggers should stand up against the powerful. He has stated that ad homonym attacks are a sign one is over the target, so his attacks are a sign that Milbloggers are hitting the target.

Yon has said he should not be excused for his misbehavior. He says that just because someone once wore a uniform does not mean he's not a clown, or that he is honest. His record in this series, seriously calls into question his integrity, *in his own words*. And even his time in uniform has been seriously questioned.

What I've found is that most of his accusations of others are reflections of himself, not those he has accused. As an example, he has accused the Military of censorship, yet he engages in it every time a detractor asks questions. He says the powerful must be challenged, while claiming to be powerful. He is challenged.

And as I tried to wrap this up, Yon pulled out the most outlandish card he could find. He publicized the live video of an American Soldier losing his legs in combat. It takes a lot to justify that kind of idiocy, but his fans found ways to do so. When one Gold Star Mother asked him to remove the video, he called her ignorant and worse. On the other hand, a mother that said she couldn't watch that video, and feared that she'd find one of her own son's injuries, endorsed the publication.

For his part, Yon got more attention from his fans than he does on any of his normal Facebook post. 400-1000% more attention than most of his posts. And little to no condemnation in it. It is the kind of thing that spurs him to more bad behavior.

The more I found out about Yon, in *his own words*, the less respect I had for him, and the more space it took to describe him. Was he kicked out of Afghanistan for OPSEC violations? Not officially. Why was he disembedded in 2007? I don't know yet. Why was he disembedded by the Brits? I don't know yet, but indications are that it was for OPSEC violations. He's been disembedded at least 3 times now. Geraldo must be proud. Did he get two Generals fired? Nope, though he did smear their names. Is he honorable? Not in my opinion. He's just another Geraldo style sensationalist Journalist that lives off controversy. Is he a MilBlogger? According to MilBlogging.com, yes. According to many definitions, yes. Does his presence on the battlefield positively affect the outcome? Not a chance, though it can negatively effect the perceptions of it.

Here is the one thing I can tell you: I did not embark on this journey to win friends, nor to destroy an icon. I embarked on it, despite the expectation that it would alienate some readers of Yon. And the woman who was in tears at the beginning of it, because Yon had put her in the middle, has chosen to defend him in the end. I told her in the beginning, and at the end, that I won't put her in the middle. She is an intelligent and honorable woman and it is her choice to make. It saddens me that she has chosen to end our friendship, but I must respect her decisions. It shows that even the most patriotic, intelligent, and honorable, can find a way to justify even the most despicable of actions by Yon.



I have presented my findings, and the evidence for them, as factually as I could. I did not "doctor" his posts, though I did highlight specific parts, removed names of his fans, and in one place, noted and added text. I did crop them down to the pertinent parts, and in very rare cases, put parts together into one jpeg. As I said, I have no plans to make Yon a regular subject here, and hope to wash my hands of him. It was simply my turn to burn the dung, mixed with equal parts mogas and diesel, that never burns as completely or quickly as one would like.

Because burning dung is never pleasant, but it is a necessary part of military life, particularly in an expeditionary military life. Most Troops today haven't been put on the detail, but none will forget it that have. It was just my turn on the DA-6.

The Tarnak Saga:

- 1) [The Bridge Over the River Tarnak](#) Looking at Fact and Fiction of the incident
- 2) [From Tarnak Bridge to Bruhaha](#) Looking at Yon's obsession for Menard
- 3) [The Tarnak Scalp That Wasn't](#) Looking at Yon's claims of scalping Menard
- 4) [The Yon Conspiracy Over Tarnak](#): Looking at Yon's Conspiracy Theory Origins

Deviant Behavior

- 1) [Yon OPSEC Violations](#): It can't be more blatant but some are in disbelief
- 2) [Yon Publicizes Video](#) of American Soldier Losing Legs.
- 3) [Banned By Yon!](#)
- 4) [Yon's Attack on PTSD as insanity](#).
- 5) [The Banning of an Angel](#)

[Chuck Z Makes Peace with Yon](#)

More Links (and far from comprehensive but I may add to the list as I can):

TSA Incident: <http://www.skatingonstilts.com/skating-on-stilts/2010/01/sorry-tsahaters-michael-yon-isnt-a-tsa-victim-just-an-unreliable-reporter.html> (Yon complained that he was arrested by TSA for not stating his income or employer. He was actually restrained with handcuffs by Customs when he refused standard questions, particularly of people who have spent considerable time in known terrorist hot spots.)

Bouhammer Insanity Defense?: <http://www.bouhammer.com/2010/06/micheal-yon-has-lost-his-marbles-and-is-an-oxygen-thief/> (When Troy went from supporter to un-endorsing him.)

Yon FB archive: [http://www.facebook.com/posted.php?id=207730000664&share\\_id=118317618212252&comments=1#!/posted.php?id=207730000664&start=1770](http://www.facebook.com/posted.php?id=207730000664&share_id=118317618212252&comments=1#!/posted.php?id=207730000664&start=1770)

<http://www.facebook.com/posted.php?id=207730000664&start=1860#!/posted.php?id=207730000664&start=1960>

Yon Archives on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/posted.php?id=207730000664&start=2340>

TCO: Insanity Defense?: <http://tcoverride.blogspot.com/2010/04/mike-yon-has-gone-nanners.html>

The Yon Defense: <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2010/06/michael-yons-war/57483/> (A fan in the media interviews Yon and a PAO corrects the record in comments.)

The Menard Dismissal: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/afghanmission/article/816654--grounding-a-rising-military-star> 31 May 2010

The unloaded weapons response: [http://www.villainouscompany.com/vcblog/archives/2010/05/the\\_credibility.html](http://www.villainouscompany.com/vcblog/archives/2010/05/the_credibility.html) May 2010

UJ on ROE (Official v. Lower misinterpretation): `<iframe title="YouTube video player" type="text/html" width="640" height="390" src="http://www.youtube.com/embed/DUXnh7cfOM" frameborder="0" allowFullScreen"></iframe>`

!Yon/Tillman! USNI: <http://blog.usni.org/2010/04/19/one-voice-is-a-heads-up-many-voices-are-comment-page-1/#comment-223039> (The US Naval Institute notes that many Veterans are concerned for Yon's new "style.")

**Michael Yon**  
The reputation of the U.S. Naval Institute is at stake.

**Did Mubarak flee?**  
High level sources just told me Mubarak may have fled. USG working to confirm. US evacuation now very high priority. (badpostion user)

Source: Michael Yon  
Info: Full Article...

7 hours ago via NetworkBlogs · Share · 31 Jan 2010

12 people like this.

View all 29 comments

**A** John Tasti - did you miss the news report that Gamael fled with his family and 97 pieces of luggage... you can carry a LOT of money in that much luggage. I recently saw two backpacks and a regular gilo cooler like most of us take to the be...  
See More  
2 hours ago · Flag

**A** Well Luke, it could be said that the US is no longer a 1st world country.  
2 hours ago · Flag

**Michael Yon**  
Top Sources: President Mubarak may have fled.

USG working to confirm.

US evacuation taking very high priority.

**Michael Yon**  
Louann -- I spent about five years in the Army and about three years covering combat out of the Army. Clowns is as clowns does. Putting on a uniform does not an honest man, or a brave man, make. The man makes the uniform, not the inverse.  
17 hours ago · 8 people

46 people like this.

**H** Michael, please. This is not the time nor the place. Can we finish one war before another starts?  
You're putting yourself before the mission.  
April 21, 2010 at 3:23am

**L** it has become all about Michael now "Pride cometh before the fall"  
April 21, 2010 at 3:26am

**Michael Yon** Writers who are afraid to take on the powerful are useless here. Last month people were screaming the same when I took on Menard. Now we know that Menard cannot be trusted with a rifle. Menard has now been charged for negligently firing his rifle. No other writers here confronted Menard on the Tarnak River bridge or on negligently firing his rifle. None.  
Doyle and sycophantic writers who tickle your taste buds can be found elsewhere.  
April 21, 2010 at 3:34am

The Non-Captain's Journal Defends Yon: <http://www.captainsjournal.com/2010/04/19/in-defense-of-michael-yon-an-open-letter-to-milbloggers/> (One of two "Milbloggers" Yon endorses. The author is not a captain as his site name implies, but also points out Military vulnerabilities, notably the reliance on Pakistani logistics routes, for months preceding the attacks on those routes.)

Yon Interview: <http://www.warishoring.com/2010/07/01/war-blogger-michael-yon-speaks-out/>

In Response to War Porn: [http://www.soldiersperspective.us/2011/02/12/logic-disconnect/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=logic-disconnect](http://www.soldiersperspective.us/2011/02/12/logic-disconnect/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=logic-disconnect)

Wrong on Menard: <http://assolutatranquillita.blogspot.com/2010/04/to-michael-yon-thank-you.html>

The Disembled: <http://sjponeill.wordpress.com/2010/04/16/three-strikes/>

Canadian Response: <http://forums.army.ca/forums/index.php?topic=92407.0>

Der Spiegel: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,690526-2,00.html>

ND: [http://www.facebook.com/l.php?](http://www.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ottawacitizen.com%2Fnews%2FAfghanistan%2520General%2520charged%2520over%2520rifle%2520discharge%2F2931850%2Fstory.html&h=45638)

[u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ottawacitizen.com%2Fnews%2FAfghanistan%2520General%2520charged%2520over%2520rifle%2520discharge%2F2931850%2Fstory.html&h=45638](http://www.ottawacitizen.com%2Fnews%2FAfghanistan%2520General%2520charged%2520over%2520rifle%2520discharge%2F2931850%2Fstory.html&h=45638)

Lawsuit!: [http://www.politico.com/blogs/laurarozen/0410/Military\\_blogger\\_Yon\\_threatens\\_to\\_sue\\_McChrystal.html](http://www.politico.com/blogs/laurarozen/0410/Military_blogger_Yon_threatens_to_sue_McChrystal.html)

SA/Daily Mail: <http://www.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.dailymail.co.uk%2Fnews%2Farticle-1256018%2FHow-hundreds-military-personnel-millions-pounds-experimental-lung-saved-life-British-soldier-shot-accident-camp.html&h=745b4>

Canadian Response to Bridge Allegations: <http://www.vancouversun.com/news/Military%20rebuffs%20call%20general%20fired/2636068/story.html>

UK Takes over RC-

South: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceNews/DefencePolicyAndBusiness/UkTakesOverIsafsRegionalCommandSouth.htm>



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