

## First Amendment topics >



### The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. [ABOUT THE FIRST AMENDMENT >](#)

#### News Story

### Chaplain in public-worship case removed from Navy

By The Associated Press  
03.02.07

RICHMOND, Va. — A Navy chaplain who was reprimanded last fall for appearing in his military uniform at a White House news conference protesting the Navy's policy requiring nondenominational prayers outside of religious services has been removed from the Navy.

A Feb. 27 federal appeals court ruling paved the way for an order the next day dismissing Gordon Klingenschmitt. He said he signed the final paperwork yesterday morning.

"This has ended my 16-year career as an officer," Klingenschmitt said in a telephone interview yesterday. "I lost a million-dollar pension. My family has been evicted from military housing."

The decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia lifted an injunction that had prevented the Navy from dismissing Klingenschmitt in January.

Klingenschmitt, a priest in the Evangelical Episcopal Church, had served as a chaplain at Naval Station Norfolk for the last two years. Telephone messages left afterhours at the station were not returned.

A military jury in September found that he had disobeyed a superior officer's order prohibiting him from wearing his uniform during media appearances without prior permission when he led the prayer at the March 30, 2006, news conference.

Klingenschmitt had argued that he was allowed to wear his uniform if conducting a "bona fide worship service." He said he was punished for making a political speech in uniform because he prayed in Jesus' name.

In 2005, Klingenschmitt went on an 18-day hunger strike in front of the White House over the right to invoke Jesus' name in prayers as part of his Navy duties.

William Farley, Klingenschmitt's attorney, said the Navy's decision violated his client's constitutional right to practice his religion.

Klingenschmitt said he would continue a federal lawsuit against the Navy as a civilian and try to get reinstated. He said he was pursuing a doctorate in theology at Regent University in Virginia Beach and that he and his family had moved into student housing.

#### Previous

#### [Navy chaplain convicted for wearing uniform at news conference](#)

Military jury finds Lt. Gordon Klingenschmitt guilty of disobeying order barring him from appearing in uniform at media events unless conducting 'bona fide worship service.' 09.14.06

[About this site](#)

[About the First Amendment](#)

[About the First Amendment Center](#)

[RSS/podcasts](#)

[First Amendment programs](#)

[State of the First Amendment reports](#)

[Flag-desecration report](#)

[Supreme Court](#)

[Experts](#)

[Columnists](#)

[First Amendment publications](#)

[Glossary](#)

[Freedom Sings™](#)

[Events](#)

[First Amendment Schools](#)

[Congressional Research Service reports](#)

[Guest editorials](#)

[FOI material](#)

[The First Amendment Library](#)

[Lesson plans](#)

**Related**  
**News summary page**

View the latest news stories throughout the First Amendment Center Online.

 [Print](#)

Last system update: Monday, March 5, 2007 | 09:25:27

[freedomforum.org](http://freedomforum.org)

[Newseum](#)

[Contact us](#)

[Privacy statement](#)

[Related links](#)