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Article Date: Jul 17, 2007

## Chaplain Klingenschmitt Files Papers for Reinstatement Appeal

By CR Staff

(CR) – Former Navy chaplain Gordon James Klingenschmitt has filed papers through his attorneys to appeal the court-martial conviction that ended his naval career. The Navy dismissed the chaplain after his appearance at a news conference outside the White House in March 2006.

Klingenschmitt contends the dismissal is because he prayed in Jesus' name at the news conference. He claims that the law is on his side.

The Navy disagrees, claiming he disobeyed an order. According to officials, Klingenschmitt violated Navy regulations that prohibit an officer from appearing in uniform and expressing political or personal views.

“Basically we are arguing that the Navy cannot enforce one civic religion on all its chaplains,” Klingenschmitt said. “They cannot punish chaplains who pray in Jesus' name. They cannot kick us out just because we pray in uniform in public. They cannot restrict Jesus to the Sunday chapel, the way they were trying to do....”

Klingenschmitt believes he has a strong case for appeal. Congress has since changed the law that the Navy used to convict him. “Congress agreed with us and rescinded the bad policy that



was enforced against me to kick me out – so I think the law is on our side; it’s always been on our side,” he says. “Since 1860 chaplains have been allowed by law to pray in Jesus’ name – and when I continued to do that, the Navy kicked me out anyway. So they did violate the First Amendment. We just have to convince the judges that that’s what happened.”

His appeal hearing has been set for September 20.

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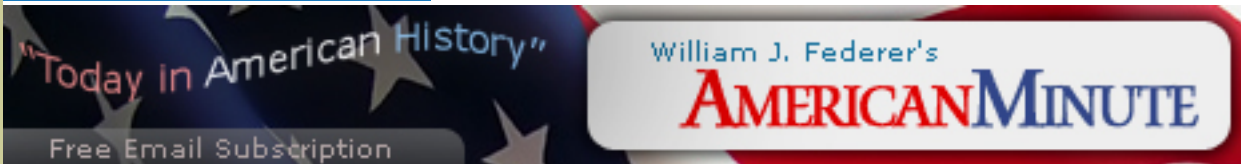
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