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Navy chaplain continues fight to pray in Jesus' name

06:00 PM EST on Thursday, March 30, 2006



A Navy chaplain was in front of the White House Thursday, claiming he's being denied his constitutional right to pray the way he sees fit.

Lt. Gordon Klingenschmitt, wearing a Navy dress blue uniform, led the protest with a series of prayers. He declined to speak and left that to supporters, including former Alabama

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**Supreme Court justice Roy
Moore.**

**They claim new Department
of Defense rules forbid
military chaplains from
publicly invoking the name
of Jesus Christ.**

**Klingenschmitt has
threatened to sue the
government for
discrimination. He's talked
about before.**

**"I don't see any other way
to protect a chaplain's first
amendment right to
compose his own prayers
and pray according to his
own diverse faith. They
won't let us pray in Jesus'
name and I think we ought
to be able to do that," he
said in February interview
at the WVEC-TV studios.**

**Navy spokesman Lieutenant
William Marks on Thursday
provided a February 21 set
of instructions from Navy
Secretary Donald Winter.**

**It says, in part, "Every
religious ministry
professional must be willing
to function in a pluralistic
environment in the military
where diverse religious
traditions exist side by side
with tolerance and respect.**

**"Chaplains will not be
compelled to participate in
religious activities
inconsistent with their
beliefs."**

Moore sees it differently.

**"We've got to recognize
that the law does not forbid
our chaplains in the military
-- in the Air Force, in the
Navy -- from praying in the
name of Jesus. Indeed, it
contradicts our entire
history and our law and it
should be stopped."**

**A Navy spokesman at the
Pentagon told 13News it's
unclear whether
Klingenschmitt broke Navy
rules by appearing in
uniform. Regulations state**

**Navy personnel can't
appear in uniform at
protests or demonstrations.**

**Kligenschmitt did neither
today. He was there, but all
he did was pray.**

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