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Navy chaplain dismissed over uniformed protest

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- Navy chaplain dismissed for wearing uniform to protest -- against orders
- Protested for the right to invoke Jesus' name in his duties as Navy chaplain
- He will continue a federal lawsuit against the Navy as a civilian

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RICHMOND, Virginia (AP) -- A Navy chaplain said Thursday he was dismissed from service following his public protest of the branch's policy on nondenominational prayer.

In September a military jury found Lt. Gordon Klingenschmitt had disobeyed a superior officer's order not to wear his uniform to a political protest at the White House in March 2006.

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

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

A federal appeals court ruling on Tuesday lifted an injunction and paved the way for the Navy to discharge Klingenschmitt.

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

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

In December 2005, Klingenschmitt went on an 18-day hunger

strike in front of the White House over the right to invoke Jesus' name.

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 after business hours at the station were not returned.

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