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## Chaplain discharged after ruling

**By [Leo Shane III](#), Stars and Stripes  
Mideast edition, Friday, March 2, 2007**

WASHINGTON — A Navy chaplain who claimed he was punished for praying “in Jesus’ name” at public military events was formally discharged from the service Wednesday.

Lt. Gordon Klingenschmitt, who had served as a Navy chaplain for 16 years, said service officials delivered his discharge papers Wednesday, just hours after a federal appeals court lifted its order to delay his separation.

“I’ve lost my military career, I’ve lost a million-dollar pension, my family has been evicted from military housing, my family lost its health insurance,” he said. “I’m obviously disappointed, but I would do it all over again to stand up for what I believe.”

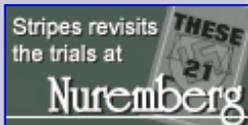
Klingenschmitt staged an 18-day hunger strike outside the White House in January 2006 to protest regulations on military chaplains’ public prayers. He said that senior leaders had privately reprimanded him for using Christian-specific prayers — invoking the name of Jesus — in events where non-Christians were also present.



*Joe Gromelski / S&S*  
**Navy Chaplain (Lt.) Gordon Klingenschmitt — shown in Washington in 2005 — said service officials delivered his discharge papers Wednesday. He claimed he was punished for praying “in Jesus’ name” at public military events. “I’m obviously disappointed, but I would do it all over again to stand up for what I believe,” he said.**



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The chaplain appeared in uniform outside the White House at a similar event on March 30, violating Navy rules about wearing official attire. He was court-martialed for disobeying orders, and convicted last November.

Following that he switched his religious endorser, prompting a full review of his credentials to be a chaplain. A Navy spokesman said Thursday that the review is standard for all new chaplains, and covered his military record and not any religious views.

But Klingenschmitt said the review was punishment for his advocacy for religious freedoms, and he filed suit in federal court after the Navy's decision not to renew his commission.

That suit is still ongoing, even though the appeals court has now allowed Klingenschmitt to be discharged by the service. He said he will continue his legal fight.

Meanwhile, last fall Congress softened language regarding rules on chaplains' prayers.

"That was my goal, and I succeeded there," Klingenschmitt said. "But now I'm being sacrificed for standing up for that."

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