

PLM-II

DECISION



THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

9480

FILE: B-192718

MV

DATE: March 14, 1979

MATTER OF: Calvin A. Ehly - Temporary duty -

abandonment of TRAVEL and CLAIM for TRAVEL EXPENSES

DIGEST: Employee abandoned temporary duty travel prior to reporting to temporary duty location because living accommodations for himself and his family could not be secured at a reasonable rate. Single quarters were available at cost within the per diem allowance. He is not entitled to any expenses for the travel since paragraph C4463 of 2 Joint Travel Regulations (JTR) authorizes payment of travel expenses to point of abandonment of travel only when abandonment is for personal reasons of the employee and these reasons are acceptable to the agency or department concerned. There is no basis for payment of return travel unless employee completes assignment.

This action is in response to a request for advance decision from Mr. C. M. Abernathy, Disbursing Officer, Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. He questions the propriety of certifying a voucher representing reimbursement of travel expenses to Mr. Calvin A. Ehly incurred in connection with a temporary duty assignment that was not performed. Mr. Ehly is not entitled to travel expenses as claimed for the following reasons.

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Mr. Ehly was directed to travel from Tracyton, Washington, to Dam Neck, Virginia, to attend a training course from July 5 through August 26, 1977. Apparently, annual leave was authorized to be taken in connection with his official travel. He and his dependents departed his residence by privately owned conveyance on June 18, 1977, and arrived in Norfolk, Virginia, on June 30, 1977. On arrival he was unable to secure housing for himself and his dependents for less than \$250 a week. He then telephoned his supervisor, the travel requesting official and received approval to return to his permanent duty station.

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The Navy Regional Finance Center denied Mr. Ehly's entitlement to any travel expenses since the Government is not responsible for inconvenience incurred by reason of dependents accompanying an employee on temporary duty.

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Paragraph C4463 of 2 Joint Travel Regulations provides as follows:

"C4463 TEMPORARY DUTY ASSIGNMENT ABANDONED
OR NOT COMPLETED

"Except as provided in par. C4462, if an employee abandons his travel prior to reporting to a place of temporary duty assignment or prior to completion of duties in connection with a temporary duty assignment for personal reasons which are acceptable to the department or agency concerned, such as illness in his family or similar circumstances, only the expense of travel to the point of abandonment is allowable. The cost relating to return of the employee to his permanent duty station will not be at Government expense unless it is determined administratively that the employee substantially completed the mission requirements of the temporary duty assignment or that such completion was at no additional cost to the Government."

Mr. Ehly is not entitled to any expenses in connection with his return travel since he abandoned his travel prior to reporting to his temporary duty station. See 47 Comp. Gen. 59 (1967) and 41 Comp. Gen. 573 (1962).

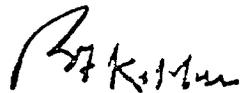
The above-quoted provision states that the expenses of the travel to the point of abandonment are allowable only when the reason for abandoning the travel is acceptable to the agency or department concerned. See 34 Comp. Gen. 52 (1954). Although Mr. Ehly's immediate supervisor evidently believes the reason for abandonment to be acceptable, the Navy Regional Finance Center, Washington, D.C., disallowed the claim. The determination that the reason for abandonment of the travel appears correct under the regulations since the reasons for approval therein include only illness in the family and similar reasons. The facts given do not include a reason for abandonment similar to illness in the family.

We note that the Disbursing Officer, Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, was advised by the Navy Regional Finance Center, Norfolk, that single lodging accommodations, at a rate within

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the per diem allowance are available in the Norfolk area the entire year. Thus, it appears that Mr. Ehly could have secured quarters for himself at a cost within the per diem allowance and completed his temporary duty assignment.

In the absence of a determination by the Navy that the reason for abandonment was acceptable, Mr. Ehly is not entitled to any travel expenses to his temporary duty assignment. Since the mission requirements of the temporary duty were not completed he is not entitled to any return travel expenses. Action should be taken to collect any travel advance made in connection with the assignment. The voucher will be retained here.



Deputy Comptroller General
of the United States