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DECISION

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

FILE: B-201344

DATE: September 29, 1981

MATTER OF: Michael L. Parra - Storage of household goods by employee's parents

DIGEST: Employee of Veterans Administration was transferred from New Hampshire to Philippines. He was authorized to store goods and he stored them in a house owned by his parents. Record discloses no contract between VA and parents for storage. Under Foreign Service Regulation § 171 contained in Vol. 6 of Foreign Affairs Manual, which is applicable to VA employees assigned to Philippines Offices, VA assumes no obligation nor undertakes any services with respect to effects not in storage under contract between VA and Storage firm. Claim is disallowed.

This decision is in response to a letter from Mr. G. E. Endermuhle, Chief, Support Services Division, Manila Regional Office, Veterans Administration (VA), requesting an advance decision on whether a voucher covering the nontemporary storage of the household goods of an overseas VA employee submitted by his parents may be paid. For the reasons set below, we hold that the claim may not be paid.

Under Travel Authority No. 358-8, dated December 27, 1979, Michael L. Parra, a VA employee, was authorized travel for permanent duty from Manchester, New Hampshire, to the VA Regional Office in Manila, Philippines. The travel order authorized the shipment of up to 4,000 lbs. of household goods to his new station and also authorized the nontemporary storage of the balance. The VA Medical Center in Manchester, New Hampshire authorized the shipment of the balance of the household goods to a Los Angeles, California address. The record shows that the address is that of a house owned by the employee's parents. There is no evidence of any contract entered into between the VA and the employee's parents for the storage of the household goods nor is there any evidence of what steps, if any, were taken to determine the adequacy of other storage facilities either in New Hampshire or in Los Angeles.

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On July 18, 1980 the employee's parents submitted a voucher in the amount of \$1,200.00 (6 months storage at \$200.00 per month) for the nontemporary storage of the employee's household goods. The voucher did not disclose the weight of the household goods.

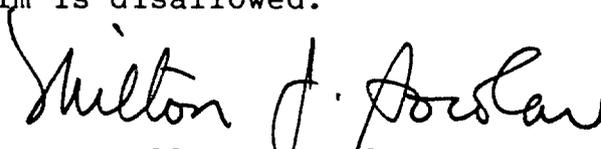
Under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. § 235, the VA Administrator may, under regulations prescribed by the President or his designee, grant VA employees assigned to the VA Offices in the Philippines various listed benefits, including those related to the storage of household goods normally allowed to Foreign Service Personnel. By VA Manual MP-1, Part II, Chapter 2, paragraph 15, the VA Administrator adopted the Uniform State/AID/USIA Foreign Service Regulations, which are contained in Volume 6 of the Foreign Affairs Manual (6 FAM), as the governing regulations for travel benefits for VA employees assigned to the Manila Regional Office.

Section 171; 6 FAM provides:

"Storage of effects may be authorized either at the place where the effects are located or, if no adequate storage is available at such place, at another place which has adequate storage facilities. * * * The Department or Agency assumes no obligation, apart from claims payable under 31 U.S.C. 240 through 243, nor will it undertake any services with respect to effects not in storage under contracts between the Department or Agency and storage firm."

In the absence of any contract between the VA and the employee's parents for the nontemporary storage of the employee's household effects as required by 6 FAM § 171, there is no authority for payment of the voucher.

Accordingly, the claim is disallowed.


Acting Comptroller General
of the United States