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DECISION



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

Request for Reimbursement of
FILE: B-195382 DATE: June 23, 1980

MATTER OF: Donald E. Cellemme - Relocation expenses]

DIGEST: Air Force employee requested transfer from Langley Air Force Base, Virginia, to Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, due to desire to return to Georgia. Air Force reports that prior to transfer employee understood that transfer was to be at his own expense. Further, SF-50 effecting his reassignment to Robins Air Force Base states that transfer was at employee's request. These factors, taken together, lead to inescapable conclusion that employee initiated and obtained transfer for his own benefit. Accordingly, transfer was not in the interest of the Government and employee is not entitled to travel and transportation expenses and applicable allowances.

The Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee has forwarded to us a request for our decision by the Air Force concerning the propriety of paying the relocation expenses of Mr. Donald E. Cellemme. The Committee has assigned this matter PDTATAC Control No. 79-20. ACC

Mr. Cellemme, an employee of the Department of the Air Force employed at Langley Air Force Base, Virginia, as an Electronics Equipment Specialist, GS-11, submitted an application for a position as Electronics Mechanic Foreman, WS-9 at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia. He was selected for the position and reported to his new duty station on June 12, 1977.

Incident to this transfer Mr. Cellemme requested reimbursement from the Air Force of his relocation

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expenses. The Air Force has submitted the matter to this Office for an advance decision on the basis that Mr. Cellemme requested the transfer because of his desire to return to Georgia and that, prior to the transfer, he understood that the transfer would be at his own expense. Finally, the Air Force reports that the SF-50 reassigning Mr. Cellemme to Robins Air Force Base shows that the transfer is at the employee's request.

Federal Travel Regulations (FPMR 101-7, May 1973) paragraph 2-1.3 provides for the payment of travel and transportation expenses and applicable allowances for the transfer of an employee from one official duty station to another provided that the transfer is determined to be in the interest of the Government and not at the employee's request.

In David C. Goodyear, 56 Comp. Gen. 709 (1977), we quoted guidelines to assist agencies in determining whether a transfer is in the interest of the Government. The first guideline quoted in that decision, at page 711, is:

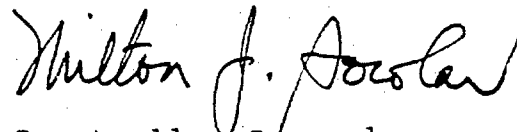
"If an employee has taken the initiative in obtaining a transfer to a position in another location, an agency usually considers such transfer as being made for the convenience of the employee or at his request."

The facts of the case support a finding that the transfer was at the employee's request. Mr. Cellemme stated on his job application that he desired to return to the Georgia area. We are aware that the fact that the transfer would also serve the employee's personal needs, by itself, would not preclude a determination that the transfer was in the Government's interest. See 54 Comp. Gen. 892, at 894 (1975). However, when the employee's desire to return to Georgia is taken together with the report that prior to the transfer he understood that the transfer was to be at his own expense and that the SF-50 effecting his reassignment stated that the transfer was at his request, we believe that the inescapable conclusion is that Mr. Cellemme initiated

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and obtained the transfer for his own benefit. Therefore, he is not entitled to reimbursement of travel and transportation expenses and applicable allowances incident to his transfer to Robins Air Force Base.

Accordingly, the voucher may not be paid.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Milton J. Fowler".

Acting Comptroller General
of the United States