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PLM 2

## DECISION



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

*Inclusion of Recreation Vehicle in Computation of Lodging Expenses*

FILE: B-196968

DATE: July 1, 1980

MATTER OF: Lieutenant Robert G. Stentz, USN

**DIGEST:** Member who uses personal recreation vehicle for lodging while on temporary duty may not be reimbursed portion of the monthly purchase payment on his recreation vehicle for time in temporary duty status. Reimbursement of lodging expenses is to compensate a member for additional expenses he incurs while away from his permanent station. In the case of a member who chooses to reside in a personal recreation vehicle while on temporary duty average lodging costs may include only expenses such as parking space rental, utility connections and shower fees in the computation of his per diem. See 1 JTR, paras. M4205-5 and M4007-4.

This case concerns the question of whether a member of the Navy may include a portion of the monthly purchase payment on his recreation vehicle in computing his lodging cost incident to temporary duty. For the reasons set forth below, the member may not compute his per diem on that basis.

The question was submitted for an advance decision by R. B. VanHorn, Disbursing Officer, U.S.S. William V. Pratt (DDG-44), FPO New York 09501. The Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee approved the request and assigned it PDTATAC Control No. 79-40.

On January 22, 1979, the Navy issued orders to Lieutenant Robert G. Stentz, USN, directing him to perform approximately 3 weeks of temporary duty at Virginia Beach, Virginia, and then to report to the home port of the U.S.S. William V. Pratt for permanent assignment.

In accord with his orders, Lieutenant Stentz arrived at Virginia Beach for his temporary duty assignment on March 30, 1979. He drove his personal recreation vehicle to the temporary duty site. No Government quarters were available for

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B-196968

occupancy at the temporary duty station. He lodged in his recreational vehicle and paid a fee for a rental space. The member was reimbursed for his travel costs including a per diem rate which used the rental fee to determine the average lodging cost. The member now seeks reimbursement of \$167.20 which is the portion of his monthly vehicle purchase payment attributable to the 20 days he spent in the temporary duty status from March 31 to April 19, 1979.

Section 404 of title 37, United States Code, authorizes travel and transportation allowances for military members in certain situations under regulations prescribed by the Secretaries concerned. For a member who chooses to lodge in his private recreation vehicle at a temporary duty site, the implementing regulation, paragraph M4205-5 of Volume 1 of the Joint Travel Regulations (1 JTR) specifies the manner in which per diem should be computed. For lodging costs, the regulation provides that the allowable expenses which may be considered are those listed in 1 JTR, para. M4007-4.

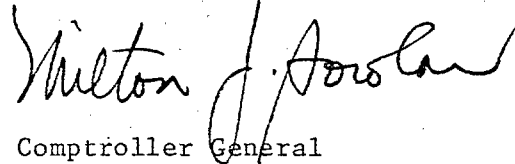
Paragraph M4007-4 lists various expenses such as parking space rental, utility connection, and shower fees; however, no provision is made for reimbursing a member for all or a portion of his monthly purchase payment for a recreation vehicle. This regulation is in accord with the general rule that an individual who chooses to lodge in his own private recreation vehicle at a temporary duty site in lieu of staying at a motel may not be reimbursed for costs associated with the vehicle such as maintenance, depreciation, or monthly purchase payments. He may only be reimbursed for average lodging cost based on expenses such as ground rental and utility costs. Jerry G. Witherspoon, B-189392, August 23, 1977; see also Glenda White, B-195319, January 24, 1980; and Doyt Y. Bolling, B-195638, September 14, 1979.

We note that the Navy in its submission recognizes that there is no provision in 1 JTR which authorizes inclusion of the expense of a member's monthly purchase payment for his recreation vehicle in computing per diem when the member resides in it during temporary duty. The Navy, however, asks whether our decision in Robert E. Larrabee, 57 Comp. Gen. 147 (1977), could be authority for reimbursing the member.

B-196968

In Larrabee we approved computing a civilian employee's average lodging cost while on temporary duty based on his expenses for monthly interest, property taxes, and utility costs for a residence he purchased at the temporary duty site. We reached the result in Larrabee because of the unusual factors present including a temporary duty assignment of 5 months, twice extended for 6 months each time, and clear evidence that the house was purchased because of his temporary duty assignment. These factors are not present in the instant case.

Accordingly, the enclosed voucher may not be certified for payment and will be retained here.

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

Acting Comptroller General  
of the United States