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**DECISION**

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

**FILE:** B-199354

**DATE:** July 1, 1981

**MATTER OF:** Travel by member to designated place  
between military assignments

**DIGEST:** Dependents of a military member are located at a designated place away from his duty station because of the member's isolated duty, unusually arduous duty, or unaccompanied overseas tour. Travel by the member to the designated place upon assignment to the permanent duty station to which he is not authorized to take his dependents and upon his next permanent change of station at Government expense may be authorized by amendment to the Joint Travel Regulations, but the authorization of travel to the designated place must be based on the member's need to assist in arranging for transportation of dependents, household or personal effects, or privately owned conveyance.

This decision is in response to a request for an advance decision from the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Installations) concerning whether the Joint Travel Regulations may be amended to authorize members of the uniformed services, upon return from certain types of duty, to travel to the place where their dependents are located and then on to their new duty station rather than directly to the new station. The matter has been assigned control number 80-16 by the Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee.

For the reasons explained below the answer to the question is yes.

The Assistant Secretary notes that members of the uniformed services are authorized to move their dependents at Government expense to a designated place under paragraph M7005, Volume 1, Joint Travel Regulations (1 JTR), in the following circumstances:

- "a. Assignment of a member to unusually arduous duty with projected

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absences of the unit from its assigned homeport for more than 50 percent of the time;

"b. Assignment of a member to a vessel or afloat staff specified as operating overseas for periods of 1 year or more; and

"c. Assignment to a restricted station (to a place where dependents are not permitted)."

When dependents move to a designated place, however, the member is only entitled to travel at Government expense from his old duty station to the new duty station. When the member is ordered on his next permanent change of station, his dependents are authorized to travel from the designated place to the new duty station at Government expense. Travel for the member at Government expense, however, is again only authorized from the old to the new permanent station except in those instances where he is serving consecutive overseas tours. It has been pointed out by the Assistant Secretary that the member is often required to travel via the designated place to assist his dependents with their move. To the extent such travel exceeds the cost of direct travel from the old to the new station, it currently must be performed at the member's personal expense. It has been proposed to amend the Joint Travel Regulations to authorize travel for the member at Government expense via the designated place where his dependents are located in such situations.

The Assistant Secretary has cited our decision in 57 Comp. Gen. 198 (1977) as the rationale for authorizing the travel to a designated place for the member to assist his dependents in making the move. In that decision we determined that where a member is assigned to temporary duty and the temporary duty station becomes his permanent duty station, or where a member is assigned to a vessel and while the vessel is deployed from the home port the home port of the vessel is changed, the member's round-trip travel to the old permanent station or old home

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port may be considered travel incident to the permanent change of station. Therefore, it was held that round-trip travel of the member to the former permanent station or home port may be performed at Government expense.

Our decision in 57 Comp. Gen. 198 was predicated on a determination that travel back to the permanent duty station from the temporary duty station or new home port could be considered as travel on Government business if it was performed for the purpose of arranging for the travel of dependents and transportation of household or personal effects or a privately owned conveyance. Here the permanent duty station is not involved but the location to which travel would be authorized is the last location to which the dependents traveled at Government expense.

We have today issued a decision in Fedderman and Espiritu, B-200285/B-200857, in which the rule of 57 Comp. Gen. 198 was interpreted to permit travel from a temporary duty station to the old permanent duty station when a transfer of station occurred after a period of temporary duty even though the new permanent duty station was designated prior to the member's departure on temporary duty. Travel at Government expense in these circumstances is authorized only if the Joint Travel Regulations are amended to provide for it and only to the extent that travel by the member is performed to assist in relocating dependents and property.

Since dependents and household effects are moved to the designated location at Government expense, we believe that the reasoning in 57 Comp. Gen. at 198 as amplified in Fedderman and Espiritu is equally applicable in this situation. That is, the member should not be required to travel at his own expense to the place where his dependents and household goods were transported at Government expense if travel to that place is necessary to assist in transportation of dependents, household goods and personal effects or a privately owned conveyance.

Accordingly, Volume 1 of the Joint Travel Regulations may be amended to authorize a member to travel at Government

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expense to the designated location to which his dependents and household effects are transported. Such travel may be authorized in connection with travel to the permanent duty station to which dependents may not accompany the member and again upon return from that station in connection with travel to the next permanent duty station.

*Milton J. Bowler*

Acting Comptroller General  
of the United States