

DECISION

Estimated
118420
**THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20548**

FILE: B-205577

DATE: May 18, 1982

MATTER OF: Major General Joseph T. Palastra, Jr.

DIGEST: Animal quarantine fee incurred for family pet at service member's temporary duty station while en route to new duty station incident to transfer may not be reimbursed because it is not an allowable transportation or transportation-related expense. Further, the fact that the member was allowed accompanied travel with temporary duty en route does not permit payment of a fee incurred because the family pet was traveling with the family.

The question in this case is whether Major General Joseph T. Palastra, Jr. may be reimbursed an animal quarantine fee he paid for his family pet while performing temporary duty in Hawaii en route to Korea in conjunction with his transfer from Fort Polk, Louisiana, to the 8th Army Headquarters, Korea. He may not be reimbursed the animal quarantine fee because statutes and regulations provide no authority for such reimbursement.

The Commander, U.S. Army Finance and Accounting Office, Korea, presented the question, which was assigned Control Number 81-32 by the Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee, Department of Defense.

General Palastra's transfer travel orders authorized concurrent travel of his wife and children with him to Korea. As amended his orders also authorized 3 days of temporary duty in Hawaii en route to Korea. In fact, General Palastra performed this temporary duty and took leave in Hawaii en route to Korea and as authorized his family accompanied him. It is argued that even though the animal quarantine fee would not be reimbursable if incurred at his new duty station in Korea, the fee should be reimbursable because it was incurred at his temporary duty station in Hawaii under orders which required his presence at the temporary duty location and authorized concurrent travel of his family. In the circumstances the claimant believes that he had no other choice but to take his pet with him to his temporary duty point in Hawaii and that the claimed fee should, therefore, be paid by the Government.

A service member is authorized to transport his household goods at Government expense in connection with his transfer, 37 U.S.C. § 406 (1976). However, a family pet is specifically excluded from the definition of household goods as that term is defined in appendix J of Volume 1 of the Joint Travel Regulations, which provides that the term "* * * does not include * * * animals not required in the performance of official duties * * *." See also 27 Comp. Gen. 760 (1948). Further, costs incurred because a pet is traveling with a service member may not be reimbursed. B-175383, August 7, 1972. If the fee is characterized as a miscellaneous expense incident to the transfer, the dislocation allowance, which is intended to cover these kinds of miscellaneous expenses and which we assume was paid the claimant, would cover it. Apparently General Palastra recognizes that transportation of a pet at Government expense is not authorized and that the costs of bringing a pet to a member's new duty station are personal.

But the claimant appears to predicate his claim on the fact that he was authorized concurrent travel of dependents and that this fee was incurred because he was required to perform temporary duty en route while accompanied by his dependents and also his pet dog. However, this basis for payment depends on essentially the same argument we rejected when the Navy asked for authority to pay transportation expenses for dependents by way of a temporary duty station where the member was required to stop en route. We held that when a service member performs temporary duty en route to his new permanent duty station, there is no authority to reimburse transportation expenses for dependents by way of the temporary duty point even though the member is authorized accompanied travel to the new duty station because the statute allowed payment of expenses only between the old and new duty stations. See 42 Comp. Gen. 287 (1962). The same conclusion is required with respect to the extra costs incurred because the claimant took his pet dog with him to the temporary duty point. Just as the costs of dependents' stay in that area are not payable by the Government so the cost of keeping the pet dog is not a reimbursable expense.

Accordingly, the animal quarantine fee may not be reimbursed.

for Milton J. Hovolan
Comptroller General
of the United States