



The Comptroller General  
of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20548

## Decision

Matter of: John K. Siegert - Expenses of Training at  
Non-Government Facility - Cancellation Fee

File: B-222366

Date: September 8, 1986

### DIGEST

Defense Logistics Agency employee was orally authorized to attend seminar at non-government facility but the authorization was later cancelled. Since the employee was not notified of the cancellation until too late to avoid a cancellation fee, our Office will not object to payment or reimbursement of seminar cancellation fee.

### DECISION

This decision is in response to a request from Mr. Peter H. Tovar, Chief, Accounting and Finance Division, Office of the Comptroller, Defense Logistics Agency (DLA). The request concerns a seminar cancellation fee incurred by Mr. John K. Siegert. We hold that the DLA may pay the fee or reimburse Mr. Siegert upon proper proof of payment.

### BACKGROUND

The administrative report concerning this case, prepared by DLA's Office of Comptroller, states that Mr. Siegert was given oral authorization by his supervisor on October 1, 1984, to make reservations for an IBM-PC seminar. This seminar, from October 31, 1984, through November 2, 1984, was offered by the Center for Advanced Professional Education (CAPE), at a non-government facility.

The record shows that Mr. Siegert's written travel orders were cancelled on October 23, 1984. Due to DLA error and through no fault of his own, Mr. Siegert was not informed of the cancellation until October 30, 1984. On that same day, Mr. Siegert telephoned CAPE to cancel his seminar reservation. Mr. Siegert was billed for \$372.50 (one-half of the registration fee) for not cancelling his reservation at least 3 days prior to the beginning of the session. The fee in question is a standard charge imposed by CAPE, as prescribed in the course brochure. Mr. Siegert is seeking reimbursement of this late cancellation fee.

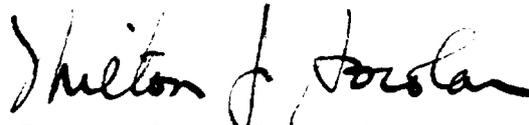
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DISCUSSION

The routing and transmittal slip accompanying the travel orders when they were finally returned to Mr. Siegert state that they were returned without approval. The preprinted transmittal slip commands: "DO NOT use this form as a RECORD of approvals, concurrences, disposals, clearances, and similar actions." (Emphasis in the original.) The travel orders themselves bear the notation "cancelled." Because of this, and because the Comptroller's report consistently refers to "cancelled" orders, we accept as true the fact that Mr. Siegert was at one time at least orally authorized to make reservations for, and to actually attend, the CAPE IBM-PC seminar.

This Office has permitted employees to be reimbursed for various expenses when they were necessarily incurred by the employee due to agency actions. For example, we permitted reimbursement for personal travel where the travel would not have been undertaken except in conjunction with a temporary duty assignment that was later cancelled. B-171804, March 2, 1971. Similarly, we have permitted reimbursement of forfeited realty purchase deposits where the forfeiture was caused by reassignment. 55 Comp. Gen. 628 (1976), and B-190764, April 14, 1978.

In the present case, Mr. Siegert received oral authorization in advance of the training date to attend the 3-day seminar. Furthermore, through no fault of his own, he was unable to avoid the seminar cancellation fee. Because of this, we would have no objection to payment by DLA or reimbursement of Mr. Siegert's seminar cancellation fee upon proper proof that Mr. Siegert has actually paid the fee.

*for*   
Comptroller General  
of the United States