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General William J. Evans
Commander in Chief
United States Air Forces in
Europe
APO U.S. Forces 09102

Dear General Evans:

The U.S. General Accounting Office has been reviewing claims for the residual value of U.S. improvements made to military facilities that were later released to the Federal Republic of Germany and other German political entities. Among the properties involved are those released by the U.S. Air Forces in Europe. Responsibility for preparing and submitting Air Force residual value claims has rested with the individual Air Force bases managing the property during occupancy.

We found that in many cases essential Air Force property records were sent to a holding area for eventual storage out of the theater and that formal claims were not made for the residual value of U.S. improvements. It is not clear that the United States has valid claims in these cases. The detailed records would be needed for this determination. These records would also be needed to sustain residual value claims, to analyze the validity of any German claims for damages to the property, and to prepare the U.S. defense against damage claims.

We discussed this problem during our review with officials of the USAFE Comptroller's Office and Real Estate Division. Recently we were informed by the Real Estate Division that the Air Force is tracing and reconstructing its property records on released facilities, and that the responsibility for managing Air Force residual value claims will be assumed by your headquarters organization.

The prompt attention of your country to the claims problem is commendable. We suggest that this be followed by formally attaching residual value claims to the German authorities in appropriate cases. For a successful settlement of these claims and the claims on the claims, we believe it is essential that all pertinent U.S. claims be on record and that the U.S. should be in a position of continually pressing them.

Sincerely yours,

Joseph Eder

Joseph Eder
Director