

DECISION

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

*Noted
PHM* 118538

FILE: B-205354

DATE: June 2, 1982

MATTER OF: Staff Sergeant Verdell H. Campbell, USA

DIGEST: An Army member's claim may not be allowed for commercial laundry expenses incurred while he was on temporary duty in Cairo, Egypt, and was entitled to per diem at the full rate authorized when Government furnished quarters are used. While under applicable regulations reimbursement of certain necessary incidental expenses in addition to per diem is permitted if approved as being necessary to the successful performance of the related duty and as in the interest of the Government, in this case such authorization was not given. In any event laundry expenses are generally considered as subsistence expenses covered by the per diem allowance the member received.

Staff Sergeant Verdell H. Campbell, USA, has appealed the disallowance of his claim for reimbursement of laundry expenses he incurred while on temporary duty in Cairo, Egypt. Since the per diem allowance he received includes an amount for incidentals such as laundry his claim may not be allowed.

Sergeant Campbell was directed by orders issued at his permanent station, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, to travel from there to Cairo, Egypt, to perform temporary duty for approximately 60 days commencing March 21, 1981, and to return to Aberdeen Proving Ground upon completion. The orders provided that quarters would be furnished by the Government and authorized per diem. The per diem rate authorized appears to have been one-half the full rate for Cairo, Egypt, which was the maximum per diem authorized when quarters are provided by the Government. The order further required Sergeant Campbell to travel in civilian clothes and authorized a \$232 clothing allowance for him.

Quarters were procured at Cairo by the Department of Defense under a contract agreement which indicated the quarters were to contain laundry facilities (washer and

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dryer). However, laundry facilities were not available, and Sergeant Campbell had to obtain commercial laundry services. He has provided receipts for these services indicating his total laundry cost was \$59.50. After completion of the temporary duty the command at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, which apparently had requested Sergeant Campbell's assignment to Cairo, sent a message in May 1981, to Aberdeen Proving Ground requesting, among other things, amendment of the original orders to reflect that laundry facilities were not available in the quarters and that reimbursement was allowed for high cost of commercial laundry. However, apparently Sergeant Campbell's orders were not so amended. The Finance Officer at Aberdeen declined payment of Sergeant Campbell's claim for the \$59.50 on the basis that laundry expenses are considered to be covered by the per diem allowance.

In a settlement dated September 8, 1981, our Claims Group also disallowed Sergeant Campbell's claim on the basis that he had failed to submit any evidence to show that his orders had been amended to include approval for reimbursement of laundry costs as miscellaneous expenses. Furthermore, the settlement stated that per diem includes the average excess subsistence costs incurred by all members in a travel status, and includes an amount for incidentals. Unless there is specific statutory or regulatory authority, the established per diem rates apply regardless of any actual expenses incurred by an individual in excess of the established rates.

Overseas travel per diem is authorized by 37 U.S.C. 404 and 405, under regulations prescribed in Volume 1, Joint Travel Regulations (1 JTR). Paragraph M4402 of 1 JTR distinguishes per diem allowances from reimbursable expenses. Per diem allowances include the cost of quarters, subsistence, and other related necessary incidental expenses. Reimbursable expenses are those expenses directly attributable to the ordered travel and temporary duty performed and are in addition to the per diem allowance.

Examples of such other necessary incidental expenses which may be reimbursed in addition to per diem, are certain tips paid in connection with transportation and baggage handling, communication services, passport and visa fees, and entry fees and boarding taxes. 1 JTR Chap. 4,

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Part I. Also, reimbursement is authorized for other necessary incidental expenses related to official travel if they are specifically authorized in the orders or are approved after travel has been completed as being necessary to the successful performance of the related duty and in the interest of the Government. 1 JTR para M4416.

As is indicated previously, while the message from Fort Bragg requested amendment of the order, no specific authorization was given in the order directing Sergeant Campbell's travel nor in a subsequent amendment to the orders to include approval for reimbursement of laundry costs. Also, as the Finance Officer and our Claims Group noted, as a general rule laundry expenses are considered one of the incidental subsistence expenses which per diem is provided to cover. See 15 Comp. Gen. 531 (1935); 22 Comp. Gen. 813, 817 (1943); 31 Comp. Gen. 503 (1952); and Matter of Herrera, B-187976, April 11, 1977. Thus, laundry costs are regarded as covered by the per diem paid to Sergeant Campbell. Accordingly, we sustain the Claims Group's disallowance of the claim.

for Milton J. Jorolan
Comptroller General
of the United States