



COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20541

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B-179256

October 18, 1973

Lieutenant Colonel J. R. Love
Finance and Accounting Officer
Through HQDA (DACA-CSS-ST)
Forrestal Building
Washington, D.C. 20314

Dear Colonel Love:

Further reference is made to your letter of May 15, 1973, reference SCARFA-PT, forwarded here by the Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee (PDTATAC Control No. 73-36), requesting an advance decision concerning the legality of payment of a travel claim submitted by Mr. Edward P. McFadden.

Mr. McFadden's voucher, enclosed with your letter, presents a claim in the amount of \$7.04 representing reimbursement for performance of travel by privately owned vehicle between Wellsburg, West Virginia, and Oakdale, Pennsylvania, on June 20, 1972. The purpose of the travel was to obtain a Defense Department Form 1482, MAC Transportation Authorization (MTA) required to be in the traveler's possession in order to obtain return transportation to the Canal Zone after a period of home leave. It was necessary for Mr. McFadden to drive from Wellsburg (his point of home leave) to Oakdale in order to obtain the necessary form from the nearest military installation, Oakdale Army Base. The reason for this is explained in an administrative report on the claim, in pertinent part, as follows:

"2. The use and preparation of the MTA is governed by AR 59-21 (joint). Paragraph 3 of this directive provides for issuance of an MTA at the MAC APOE by the Passenger Liaison Office (PLO) for those passengers reporting without the completed form. MTMS policy, however, is to discourage issuance of this document at the terminal since standard reporting times are based on MAC flight close out times. To obtain an MTA at the terminal takes additional processing time which would have to be added to the present two-hour reporting time. Since the majority of travelers arrive with the required MTA, it is not appropriate to penalize all passengers by increasing reporting times.

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"3. It is recognized that the MTRIS instructions for obtaining MTAs could result in certain inconveniences to the civilian reemployment leave traveler. This Headquarters, therefore, recommended, 19 April 1973, that AR 59-21 be changed to require issuance of round-trip MTAs by the appropriate office at the overseas location of the member."

You have submitted the claim to this Office for a decision because no provision in the Joint Travel Regulations (JTR), Volume 2, specifically authorizes the payment sought.

Paragraph C9010, JTR, Volume 2, based on subsection 9.1d of Office of Management and Budget Circular No. A-7, Revised October 10, 1971, provides for reimbursement of "necessary miscellaneous expenses incurred by a traveler in connection with the transaction of official business." In view of the administrative policy discouraging issuance of MTA forms at the port of embarkation and the concomitant requirement that the forms be in the traveler's possession at the time of embarkation it appears that Mr. McFadden's travel from his home leave point to the nearest military installation to obtain the form was in the interest of the Government. The administrative report acknowledges that such travel is not for the convenience of the traveler and, in fact, that it may result in inconvenience.

Accordingly, we believe the travel performed was in the nature of official duty and the cost to Mr. McFadden may be reimbursed as a miscellaneous expense of travel.

With respect to the rate at which Mr. McFadden may be reimbursed for the use of his privately owned vehicle, unless facts not apparent from the file indicate otherwise, it appears that the travel as performed was advantageous to the Government as defined in paragraph C6151-1, JTR, Volume 2. Accordingly, our Office would have no objection to an administrative determination that the travel was advantageous to the Government and to a mileage rate prescribed upon such basis. See paragraph C8200-2a, JTR, Volume 2.

We note the claim presented is for a round trip distance of 64 miles although the narrative statement on the voucher refers to a 76-mile distance. No explanation of the discrepancy is provided; however we note the mileage shown in the Rand McNally Standard Highway Mileage Guide appears to agree with the claim as stated at 64 miles. Accordingly reimbursement should be allowed on that basis. Section 4.1b, OMB Circular No. A-7, supra.

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The voucher, which is returned herewith, may be paid in accordance with the forgoing.

Sincerely yours,

R.F.KELLER

Deputy Comptroller General
of the United States