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[Conferences under Department of Defense Auspices Held in Hawaii during Fiscal Year 1976 and Transition Quarter]. FPCD-77-50; B-5019. May 26, 1977. 7 pp. + enclosure (3 pp.).

Report to Sen. John L. McClellan, Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations; by Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Personnel Management and Compensation (300).
Contact: Federal Personnel and Compensation Div.
Budget Function: National Defense: Defense-related Activities (054).

Organization Concerned: Department of Defense.
Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Appropriations.

The Army, Navy, Air Force, and other Defense agencies held 60 conferences in Hawaii during fiscal year 1976, and the transition quarter ending September 30, 1976. Estimated transportation and per diem costs for the conferences totaled \$492,400. Findings/Conclusions: A lack of clear guidance in scheduling conferences may have led to unnecessary conference costs. Only the Navy has implemented a servicewide instruction for scheduling and approving conferences, although the Pacific Air Force Command has a comparable local instruction. None of the military activities in Hawaii were aware of Office of Management and Budget guidelines which require establishment procedures to reduce conference travel. Recommendations: The Secretary of Defense should direct Defense agencies and the military departments to improve conference scheduling procedures and reduce conference costs by: incorporating Office of Management and Budget guidelines into existing instructions; making sure that approving officials are apprised of conference costs as well as purpose; justifying each conference individually rather than authorizing certain conferences on a recurring basis; requiring justification where more than one participant from each activity is scheduled to attend; exploring the potential for consolidating conferences with similar purposes; and having one trip serve more than one official purpose. In addition, temporary duty travel costs could be reduced by requiring conference planners to obtain statements of nonavailability for all Government quarters before allowing military personnel to stay in commercial facilities. (SC)

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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548



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6/16/77*

MAY 26 1977

B-5019

The Honorable John L. McClellan, Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In response to your October 7, 1976, request, we examined conferences under Department of Defense auspices or on Defense-related topics held in Hawaii during fiscal year 1976 and the transition quarter. You requested information on the purpose, the rationale for holding them in Hawaii, the attendees, Government costs, and alternative arrangements which could have eliminated nonessential temporary duty travel costs for each conference.

We had to rely on Hawaiian military activities for a list of all Hawaiian conferences because Defense agencies have no requirement to collect data on conferences. For this review, conferences were defined as meetings having prearranged agenda, involving mainland U.S. participants, and resulting in a two-way exchange of information. This definition eliminated from consideration inspections, training seminars, and most staff visits.

CONFERENCES HELD IN HAWAII

The Army, Navy, Air Force, and other Defense agencies held 60 conferences in Hawaii during fiscal year 1976 and the transition quarter ending September 30, 1976. Estimated transportation and per diem costs for the conferences totaled \$492,400. (See enc. I.)

A summary of the number of conferences, sponsoring military organization, attendees, and costs follows:

FPCD-77-50

Average attendees per conference

<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Number of confer- ences</u>	<u>Conti- nental United States</u>	<u>Western Pacific and other off- island</u>	<u>Hawaii</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Average confer- ence cost (note a)</u>
Air Force	5	2	12	15	29	\$ 7,200
Army	9	6	5	27	38	8,300
Navy	25	10	4	21	35	5,600
Other Defense agencies (note b)	<u>21</u>	11	9	22	42	11,700
Total	<u>60</u>					
Average		9	6	22	37	\$ 8,200

a/Estimated travel and per diem costs based on agency estimates of travel mode and lodging used; salary costs not included.

b/Conferences hosted or sponsored by the Pacific Unified Command or Defense organizations.

From the total we selected 26 conferences for followup review on the basis of cost imbalance of non-Hawaiian participants, or potential for alternative arrangements. We discussed scheduling procedures, conference agenda, resulting reports, and conference format with local officials.

Justifications typically given for choosing Hawaii as a conference site included (1) its central location for continental United States and Western Pacific attendees, (2) the fact that the majority of attendees lived in Hawaii, and (3) the location in Hawaii of major military commands. We believe however, because the majority of conference attendees are often from the local area, if these conferences had been held in another location, there might have been fewer participants from Hawaii-based activities.

Because there are many military organizations on the west coast, we have identified the number of attendees from west coast locations. We have also identified the number of attendees from the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. (See enc. I, note a.) The fact that the Navy has Pacific Fleet organizations located in San Diego and that the conferences are either sponsored by or of interest to Washington headquarter activities, is evidenced by this further breakout of participants from the continental United States.

Included in the conferences examined was a 1975 version of the 1976 Army-sponsored postal conference questioned by your Committee. The 1975 conference, sponsored by the Navy, cost an estimated \$32,000. We were told the Navy planned to hold another postal conference in April 1977; however, a proposed agenda was not available for examination at the time of our review.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULING PROCEDURES COULD BE IMPROVED

We believe improved conference scheduling procedures could have reduced conference costs. For example, only the Navy has implemented a servicewide instruction for scheduling and approving conferences, although the Pacific Air Force command has a comparable local instruction. Moreover, none of the military activities in Hawaii were aware of Office of Management and Budget guidelines (Bulletin 76-9, issued December 1975) which required establishment of procedures to reduce conference travel. If applied systematically by Defense and all the military departments, the policies found in the Office of Management and Budget, Navy, and Pacific Air Force instructions should reduce conference travel costs.

Anticipated conference costs not identified

Except for the Navy, Defense and the other military departments have no servicewide requirement to prepare a cost estimate before scheduling and approving every conference. As a result, the official responsible for approving a conference may not know its cost because the major conference costs--transportation and per diem--are borne by the parent command of each conference attendee, not the sponsor.

Hawaii Defense and Army officials stated that the official who approves a conference considers cost, even if it is not explicitly identified for him. An Air Force cost analysis official, however, stated that locally initiated cost estimating procedures required by their local instruction had reduced costs because alternative locations and conference costs could be quantitatively evaluated. The Navy established new procedures requiring cost estimates because many conferences were routinely scheduled with objectives and results not commensurate with the corresponding expenditure of staff-hours and funds.

Recurring conferences authorized

About 45 percent of the Hawaiian conferences examined were annual or periodic, with some being authorized by a blanket instruction rather than individually justified. For example, an annual Defense Supply Agency conference (see conference no. 60, enc. I) is authorized by a 1973 instruction. Pacific Unified Command officials also told us that the Military Assistance and Sales Manual authorizes holding an annual security assistance training conference (see conference no. 30, enc. I). Also, the Unified Command holds a monthly reconnaissance scheduling conference to meet Joint Chiefs of Staff requirements (see conference no. 45, enc. I).

Because of its historical precedence, a periodic conference is more likely to be routinely approved. We believe each conference should be individually justified by its proposed purposes and cost rather than mere passage of time.

Guidance to limit conference attendance needed

issued December 4, 1975, states that Federal agencies should minimize the number of people who travel for a single purpose. Over 80 percent of the 60 Hawaiian conferences had more than one attendee from the same off-island activity. We recognize that the need for particular expertise or command authority may well justify multiple attendees; however, because significant transportation and per diem costs are involved, we believe the justification for sending more than one participant should be recorded.

Successful cost saving measures taken

Officials reported several methods used to reduce travel expenditures. For example, we were told that \$30,000 had been saved by consolidating separate security assistance training conferences into one conference (see conference no. 50, enc. I). In other instances conference attendees had combined their conference travel with other official duties in Hawaii, thus reducing the possibility that additional travel would have been necessary. These methods may have wider application if systematically considered in scheduling conferences and selecting conference participants.

Maximum use not made of Government quarters

To minimize Government per diem costs, Defense military personnel on official travel are to utilize Government quarters if available and adequate. Due to the proximity of military commands in Hawaii, conference planners have the opportunity to house conference participants in at least four separate Government facilities. However, these facilities are not fully utilized because the different services do not systematically share their unoccupied quarters. This results in excessive conference costs because attendees were lodged in higher cost commercial facilities.

For example, during fiscal year 1976 and the transition quarter, the Army sponsored 9 conferences in Hawaii involving 52 off-island military personnel. Because existing facilities at Fort Shafter were considered inadequate, these personnel were allowed to stay in commercial quarters even though adequate housing was available in Air Force and/or Navy quarters. Based on current per diem allowances of \$46.00 when using commercial quarters versus \$8.30 when using Government quarters, about \$8,000.00 in additional costs were incurred. Similarly, use of available Navy and Air Force bachelor officer quarters would have saved over \$17,000.00 in per diem costs for the 1975 Joint Military Postal Conference and the Pacific Command Legal Conference (conference nos. 19 and 58, enc. I).

Before military personnel can be housed in commercial facilities, they must obtain a statement that adequate Government quarters are not available. Housing officials told us they do not regularly contact the other services before issuing statements of nonavailability. Most agreed, however, that requiring a statement of nonavailability from all housing authorities before authorizing use of commercial facilities would increase the use of Government quarters and decrease per diem costs. The sharing of Government quarters by the military services, in our opinion, should be required for all temporary duty travel where facilities are available and located within convenient distance of each other.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A lack of clear guidance in scheduling conferences may have led to unnecessary conference costs. Accordingly, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct Defense agencies and the military departments to improve conference scheduling procedures and reduce conference costs by

- incorporating Office of Management and Budget guidelines into existing instructions,
- making sure that approving officials are apprised of conference costs as well as purpose,
- justifying each conference individually rather than authorizing certain conferences on a recurring basis,
- requiring justification where more than one participant from each activity is scheduled to attend,
- exploring the potential for consolidating conferences with similar purposes, and
- having one trip serve more than one official purpose.

In addition, temporary duty travel costs could be reduced by requiring conference planners to obtain statements of nonavailability for all Government quarters before allowing military personnel to stay in commercial facilities. Although not specifically addressed by our review, additional travel funds could be saved by applying this requirement to all official temporary duty travel and to areas other than Hawaii where the services have closely located facilities.

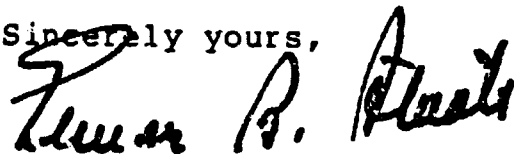
B-5019

Our Defense-wide review of travel that you also requested in your October 7, 1976, letter will cover in more detail policies and practices as they relate to all aspects of travel, including travel for conferences. The demographic data provided on the military departments will show the total amount of travel to (1) conferences and (2) high cost and overseas areas. We believe this information will provide a better basis for determining whether the selection of conference locations is a Defense-wide problem.

As requested by your Office, we did not obtain written comments from the Department of Defense on the results of this review in Hawaii. This report contains a recommendation to the Secretary of Defense. As you know, section 236 of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 requires the head of a Federal agency to submit a written statement on actions taken on our recommendations to the House Committee on Government Operations and the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs not later than 60 days after the date of the report and to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations with the Agency's first request for appropriations made more than 60 days after the date of the report.

We will be in touch with your Office in the near future to arrange for release of this report to the Secretary of Defense and the individual services for their information.

Sincerely yours,



Comptroller General
of the United States

Enclosure

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DOD SPONSORED CONFERENCES HELD IN HAWAII--FY 1976 AND TRANSITION QUARTER

Nature of conference	Sponsoring activity	Date	Number of participants from:				Hawaii	Total	Costs (note b)
			Continental United States (note a)		Western Pacific and other off-island				
			Military	Civilian	Military	Civilian			
Air Force:									
Career Motivation Conference	Headquarters, Pacific Air Forces	Oct. 20-21, 1975	3	-	12	-	4	19	\$ 4,000
Social Actions Workshop	do.	July 27-30, 1976	2	-	10	-	4	16	6,100
Management Engineering Team Commander's Conference	do.	July 27-30, 1976	1	-	6	1	9	17	3,600
1975 Annual Engineering and Services Conference	do.	Oct. 22-24, 1975	1	-	17	-	27	45	11,700
1976 Annual Engineering and Services Conference	do.	Sept. 22-24, 1976	<u>2</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>10,600</u>
Air Force total			<u>9</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>73</u>	<u>143</u>	<u>36,000</u>
Army:									
35th U.S. Army-Japan Ground Self-Defense Force Intelligence Exchange Conference	U.S. Army-Japan	Nov. 4- 7, 1975	2	-	e/7	-	21	3	3,700
Pacific War Reserve Conference	Department of the Army	July 29-31, 1975	8	6	7	-	15	36	15,600
Pacific Army Operation Planning Conference	do.	Feb. 4- 6, 1976	14	1	6	-	9	30	15,700
Review Conference on Expansion of Army Reserve Center at Hilo, Hawaii	U.S. Army Engineer Division, Pacific	Jan. 23, 1976	2	-	-	-	9	11	1,300
Architect/Engineer Conference on Alteration of Tripler Army Medical Center	do.	Sept. 8-13, 1976	1	1	-	-	97	99	1,800
Financial Planning and Retail Merchandise Conference	Headquarters--Army-Air Force Exchange Service, Pacific	July 19-20, 1976	-	2	-	8	11	21	d/e, 200
Annual Regional Exchange Commander/Executives Conference	do.	Sept. 21-24, 1976	-	2	4	5	25	36	e/7, 800
Standard Supply System to Standard Army Intermediate Level Supply System Level AB Expanded System Integration Test/Prototype Evaluation Test Conversion Conference	U.S. Army Computer Systems Command	March 15-26, 1976	2	4	-	1	27	34	8,800
Worldwide Integrated Management of Subsistence Conference	Department of the Army	July 22-23, 1975	<u>2</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>10,000</u>
Army total			<u>31</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>242</u>	<u>339</u>	<u>70,900</u>
Navy:									
Ocean Surveillance Training Conference	Joint Chiefs of Staff	Sept. 25-26, 1975	9	-	2	-	28	39	5,100
Annual Review of Planned Financial Systems Modifications	Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet (CINCPACFLT)	Dec. 18-19, 1975	5	3	-	-	92	100	4,500
USS KITTY HAWK Overhaul Duration Conference	do.	July 22-23, 1976	3	-	-	-	7	10	1,400
FY 1979 Military Construction Program Conference	do.	Nov. 20-21, 1975	6	3	-	-	26	35	3,800
1975 Joint Pacific Area Military Postal Conference	Commander, Naval Logistics Command, Pacific	Sept. 29- Oct. 3, 1975	11	19	23	-	22	75	31,900

Nature of conference	Sponsoring activity	Date	Number of participants from:				Hawaii	Total	Costs (note b)
			Continental		Western Pacific				
			United States (note a) Military	Civilian	and other off-island Military	Civilian			
Navy: (continued)									
GAPPILLER (Satellite Communication System)	CINCPACFLT	April 29-30, 1976	1	1	2	-	22	26	\$ 1,200
Weifare and Recreation Conference	do.	March 15-19, 1976	3	7	2	5	13	30	f/7,300
Pacific Fleet Signals Security Conference	do.	Jan. 12-16, 1976	4	-	5	-	14	23	3,600
Coordinating Conference With Fleet Intelligence Command-Europe on Intelligence Support to Operating Forces	Fleet Intelligence Command, Pacific	Feb. 9-11, 1976	5	-	-	-	14	19	2,900
Pacific Naval Construction Force Management Conference	Commander, Mobile Construction Battalions, Pacific	March 2- 5, 1976	6	-	4	-	12	22	3,700
Conference to Develop Project Implementation Plan for Hawaii Defense Satellite Communication System	Naval Systems Electronics and Engineering Activity, Pacific	Feb. 23- March 2, 1976	1	9	-	-	15	25	6,400
Planning Conference to Standardize the Fleet Ship's Force Overhaul Management System	Naval Sea System Command	April 21-24, 1976	4	7	-	-	8	19	6,500
Communications Conference	Headquarters, Fleet Marine Forces, Pacific (FMFPAC)	Feb. 3- 5, 1976	13	2	8	-	14	37	9,600
Radio Battalion and Cryptologic Training Conference	FMFPAC-1st Radio Battalion	March 15-18, 1976	2	-	1	-	25	34	5,900
Commanding Officers Conference	FMFPAC	Dec. 2- 4, 1975	16	1	1	-	32	50	5,100
Aviation Logistics Conference	FMFPAC	Feb. 18-20, 1976	4	-	5	-	13	22	3,400
Chief Petty Officer Command Symposium	Submarine Command, Pacific	Nov. 18-21, 1975	30	-	4	-	23	57	8,900
Squadron/Group Commanders Conference	do.	Feb. 11-12, 1976	6	-	2	-	6	14	3,200
Submarine Liaison Officer Conference	do.	Aug. 16-20, 1976	9	-	5	-	17	31	5,200
Supply Support Conference	do.	Sept. 13-16, 1976	4	-	4	-	9	17	2,500
RIMPAC (Multination Exercise) Planning Conference	Commander, 3rd Fleet	Aug. 30- Sept. 3, 1976	13	5	10	1	40	69	5,000
RIMPAC Operations Conference	do.	Sept. 27- Oct. 1, 1976	8	4	10	-	50	72	4,500
Pacific Fleet Tactical Coordination Conference	do.	Oct. 21-23, 1975	8	2	-	-	24	34	2,700
Commanding Officer's Conference	Commander, Ocean Systems Pacific	Oct. 20-24, 1975	7	-	2	-	1	10	2,900
Operation Officer's	do.	June 14-20, 1976	7	-	2	-	1	10	2,800
Navy total			191	63	92	6	528	880	140,000
Department of Defense:									
Combined Order of Battle for NEAsia Conference	Commander in Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC)	Sept. 24-26, 1975	-	2	1	-	5	8	1,700
Pacific Command (PACOM) Data Systems Center Planning Conference	do.	Oct. 30-31, 1975	-	3	-	-	4	7	1,500
Naval Intelligence Processing System Conference	Defense Intelligence Agency	Nov. 1975 (3 days)	2	2	-	-	36	40	2,600

Nature of conference	Sponsoring activity	Date	Number of participants from:				Hawaii	Total	Costs (note b)
			Continental United States (note a)		Western Pacific and other off-island				
			Military	Civilian	Military	Civilian			
Department of Defense: (continued)									
Interagency Steering Group Conference	Defense Intelligence Agency	July 26-30, 1976	2	3	-	-	25	30	\$ 3,600
1976 Pre-Target Intelligence/Tactical Target Materials Conference	do.	Oct. 12-15, 1975	1	3	-	-	9	13	2,900
Monthly Peacetime Reconnaissance Scheduling Conference	CINCPAC	Dec. 8- 9, 1975	3	-	26	2	25	56	9,000
Exercise Team Spirit 76 Preliminary Planning Conference	do.	Dec. 14-18, 1975	2	-	2	-	27	31	2,100
Exercise Team Spirit 77 Preliminary Planning Conference	do.	Aug. 3- 5, 1976	1	-	1	-	50	52	900
Petroleum Logistics Conference	do.	July 15-17, 1975	10	9	12	-	18	49	16,300
Military Assistance Advisory Group Chiefs Conference	do.	Feb. 3- 5, 1976	16	8	19	-	41	84	32,100
Pacific Tri-Service Training Conference	do.	March 1-10, 1976	6	13	18	1	19	57	29,200
U.S. Republic of Korea Security Consultative Meeting	Secretary of Defense	May 26-27, 1976	11	17	10	5	10	53	25,200
CINCPAC Operations Planning Conference	CINCPAC	Oct. 30-31, 1975	7	1	7	-	47	62	7,900
Military Message Experiment Review	do.	May 10-15, 1976	1	21	-	-	11	33	17,600
APACHE (Communication systems project) Update Conference	do.	Jan. 21-22, 1976	4	21	7	-	13	45	16,100
APACHE Updated Conference	do.	July 27-28, 1976	1	14	2	1	15	33	9,200
APACHE Test Working Group Conference	CINCPAC	Sept. 9-10, 1976	3	10	-	-	18	31	7,000
Submarine Cable Restoration Conference	do.	Sept. 20, 1976	2	2	1	-	20	25	2,800
PACOM Legal Conference	do.	Nov. 30- Dec. 5, 1975	6	4	31	4	21	66	35,300
Interim Digital Communications Subsystems/Defense Satellite Communications System Conference	Defense Communications Agency	Sept. 23-24, 1976	-	5	-	-	25	30	3,000
Defense Property Disposal Regional Commanders Conference	Defense Property Disposal Region-Pacific	July 29-31, 1975	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>19,500</u>
DOD total			<u>80</u>	<u>143</u>	<u>156</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>469</u>	<u>g/872</u>	<u>\$245,500</u>
Total			<u>311</u>	<u>229</u>	<u>332</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>1,312</u>	<u>2,234</u>	<u>\$492,400</u>

a/Continental United States travelers include 246 (46 percent) from the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area and 32 (6 percent) for the three west coast States.

b/Estimated transportation and per diem costs for off-island participants, salary costs not included.

c/Nonappropriated funds.

d/About \$3,700 were nonappropriated funds.

e/About \$3,900 were nonappropriated funds.

f/Data provided by CINCPAC as estimated only.

g/Includes four Japanese military officers attending at no U.S. Government expense.