



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

092188

B-177593

May 18, 1973

30905

Mr. H. A. Leibert
Authorized Certifying Officer
Federal Highway Administration
United States Department of Transportation
1000 North Glebe Road
Arlington, Virginia 22201

Dear Mr. Leibert:

We refer further to your letter of November 27, 1972, reference 15-05.2, which transmitted for our advance decision a voucher involving travel expenses in the amount of \$64.50 for Donald L. Neumann.

You indicate that Mr. Neumann was scheduled to perform temporary duty at points in Louisiana away from his permanent duty station in Arlington, Virginia, to begin on September 25, 1972, and that he was authorized to take annual leave at St. Louis, Missouri, for the period September 18 through 22, 1972, while en route to Louisiana. However, on September 19 while on annual leave in St. Louis Mr. Neumann was notified that his temporary duty had been canceled and he was directed to return by September 25 to his permanent station for duty. In his voucher Mr. Neumann states that he paid the excess fare for travel via St. Louis, Missouri, which apparently amounted to \$35 (\$114 one-way air fare via the indirect route less \$79 the direct route air fare). He states further that the return fare from St. Louis was paid for by turning in the unused part of the original one-way ticket plus personal funds. Personal funds used apparently amounted to \$8, the value of the ticket turned in being \$53 (\$114 less \$61, the St. Louis to Washington fare) and the cost of the ticket from St. Louis to Washington being \$61. Since the direct route costs for the travel originally authorized would have been at least \$179.50 consisting of \$158 air fare plus \$21.50 taxi fares, Mr. Neumann claims reimbursement for the full cost of the travel as performed. His claim for \$64.50 apparently represents \$35 for excess fare initially paid, \$8 for the cost of the return flight which was paid in cash, and \$21.50 for taxi fares between residence and airport. He also indicates on his voucher that he would not have traveled to St. Louis for leave but for the temporary duty assignment.

We have consistently held that an employee assigned to temporary duty who departs prematurely for an alternate destination on authorized

[Temporary Duty Travel Expenses]

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annual leave which he would not have taken but for the temporary duty should not be penalized by reason of a subsequent cancellation of the temporary duty assignment. In such cases reimbursement to the employee for travel expenses incurred is limited to the expense that would have been incurred had he traveled from headquarters to the temporary duty station and returned by the usually traveled direct route. See 36 Comp. Gen. 421 (1965) and decisions cited therein; B-171604, March 2, 1971, B-175427, April 14, 1972, copies enclosed.

Mr. Neumann's claim is less than the cost the Government would have paid for direct travel incident to the authorized temporary duty. Under the cited decisions his full claim may be allowed. We are aware that such payment will include reimbursement of the \$35 Mr. Neumann paid from his own funds as excess fare incident to what would have been circuitous travel via St. Louis. However, since he would not have traveled to St. Louis but for the temporary duty assignment and since the costs incurred for travel incident to the planned temporary duty do not exceed the amount the Government would have paid for direct travel to the temporary duty point and return we consider it reasonable to allow all expenses claimed.

The voucher which is returned herewith may be certified for payment if otherwise correct.

Sincerely yours,

Paul G. Dumbly

For the Comptroller General
of the United States

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