

Board of Contract Appeals
General Services Administration
Washington, D.C. 20405

August 6, 2003

GSBCA 16146-TRAV

In the Matter of ROD W. SCHMIT

Rod W. Schmit, Panama City, FL, Claimant.

Judy Hughes, Travel Pay Services, Systems and Procedures, Defense Finance and Accounting Service, Columbus, OH, appearing for Department of Defense.

PARKER, Board Judge.

Background

When Rod Schmit's scheduled annual leave was canceled by his supervisor at the Department of the Navy, Mr. Schmit was unable to use an airline ticket that he had purchased with frequent flyer miles. Mr. Schmit had paid a \$10 fee to obtain the ticket, and when his leave was canceled, he incurred a \$100 fee to restore the unused frequent flyer miles to his airline account. Mr. Schmit has asked the Board to review his agency's decision to deny his claim for reimbursement of the \$110 that he spent as a result of the canceled leave.

Discussion

We agree with the agency that Mr. Schmit's claim may not be paid. The Board is not aware of, nor has Mr. Schmit pointed us to, any statute or regulation governing travel of federal civilian employees which would authorize the Government to reimburse an employee for either of the claimed expenses. In John W. Keys III, 60 Comp. Gen. 629 (1981), the Comptroller General, the Board's predecessor in deciding federal employee travel claims, held that there was no legal authority to reimburse an employee for a fee incurred for changing the dates of travel on a "super-saver" airline ticket when the employee's scheduled annual leave was canceled. The Comptroller General reasoned that because the fee was incurred in connection with purely personal travel, there was no legal authority for reimbursement. The same reasoning has been followed many times over the years:

We have consistently held that where the need to perform official duties causes delay or cancellation of personal travel plans and results in increased

personal travel expenses to the employee, there is no legal basis to reimburse those additional costs.

Alexander Baumgarten, M.D., B-252599 (Aug. 5, 1993) (citation omitted); see also Karl G. Kessler, B-190755 (June 15, 1978) (forfeited hotel room deposit and spouse's travel costs not reimbursable).

Mr. Schmit's claimed expenses -- the \$10 fee to obtain a frequent flyer ticket and the \$100 charge for restoring the unused miles to his airline account -- are clearly related to personal, not official, travel. We agree with the Comptroller General that there is no authority to reimburse those costs. Accordingly, Mr. Schmit's claim must be denied.

ROBERT W. PARKER
Board Judge