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B-131611, Feb. 15, 1968

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B-131611, FEB. 15, 1968

PRINTING - CARDS, BUSINESS - PERSONAL V OFFICIAL EXPENSE DECISION TO CERTIFYING OFFICER OF NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR, CONCERNING PROPRIETY OF CERTIFYING RECLAIM FOR COST OF PRINTING 250 BUSINESS CARDS FOR EMPLOYEE'S USE DURING TEMPORARY DUTY IN EUROPE. THE COST OF PRINTING BUSINESS CARDS FOR EMPLOYEES USE ON TEMPORARY DUTY OVERSEAS CONSTITUTES A PERSONAL RATHER THAN OFFICIAL EXPENSE AND IN ABSENCE OF SPECIFIC STATUTORY AUTHORITY APPROPRIATED FUNDS MAY NOT BE USED FOR THE COST OF PRINTING. 12 COMP. GEN. 565; 41 ID. 529.

TO MR. FLOYD P. HOUGH:

THIS REFERS TO YOUR LETTER OF JANUARY 10, 1968, REFERENCE F50NCR/ABF), WITH ENCLOSURES, REQUESTING WHETHER YOU MAY CERTIFY FOR PAYMENT THE CLAIM OF MR. THOMAS F. HERR, A NATIONAL PARK SERVICE EMPLOYEE, IN THE AMOUNT OF $20.50, TAX EXCLUDED. THIS AMOUNT REPRESENTS A RECLAIM FOR THE COST OF PRINTING 250 BUSINESS CARDS WHICH WAS ADMINISTRATIVELY DISALLOWED ON THE BASIS THAT THE EXPENSE WAS PERSONAL.

MR. HERR WHO WAS ON TEMPORARY DUTY IN EUROPE FOR APPROXIMATELY ONE MONTH IN 1967 CONTENDS THAT THE USE OF BUSINESS CARDS WAS NECESSARY IN CONDUCTING BUSINESS IN EUROPE FOR THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE. THE ACCOUNTING OFFICERS OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE LONG HELD THAT THE COST OF BUSINESS CARDS OR OFFICIAL CALLING CARDS CONSTITUTES A PERSONAL RATHER THAN AN OFFICIAL EXPENSE OF THE EMPLOYEE OR OFFICER FOR WHOSE USE THEY ARE PROCURED AND THAT SUCH COSTS ARE NOT CHARGEABLE TO PUBLIC FUNDS IN THE ABSENCE OF SPECIFIC STATUTORY AUTHORITY THEREFOR. 12 COMP. GEN. 565; 41 ID. 529.

ALSO, AS TO THE PERSONAL NATURE OF SUCH CARDS SEE PARAGRAPH 18 OF THE REGULATIONS OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON PRINTING WHICH PROVIDED, AT THE TIME THE CARDS WERE PRINTED THAT:

"PRINTING OR ENGRAVING OF CALLING OR GREETING CARDS IS CONSIDERED TO BE PERSONAL RATHER THAN OFFICIAL AND SHALL NOT BE DONE AT GOVERNMENT EXPENSE.'

THEREFORE, IN VIEW OF THE LONG STANDING RULE OF THE ACCOUNTING OFFICERS OF THE GOVERNMENT AND SINCE WE ARE NOT AWARE OF ANY PROVISION OF LAW WHICH SPECIFICALLY PROVIDES FOR OR AUTHORIZES THE PRINTING OF THE BUSINESS CARDS, APPROPRIATED FUNDS MAY NOT BE USED TO PAY FOR THE COST OF PRINTING SUCH CARDS.