

B-241249

February 15, 1991

Digest

Employee who purchased non-refundable low-fare, round-trip airline ticket and arranged to take annual leave in anticipation of a personal trip may not be reimbursed the cost of this ticket when the employee's official duties caused his leave to be cancelled and rendered him unable to use the ticket. There is no legal basis for the claim.



Comptroller General  
of the United States  
Washington, D.C. 20548

# Decision

**Matter of:** Earl J. Barlow  
**File:** B-241249  
**Date:** February 15, 1991

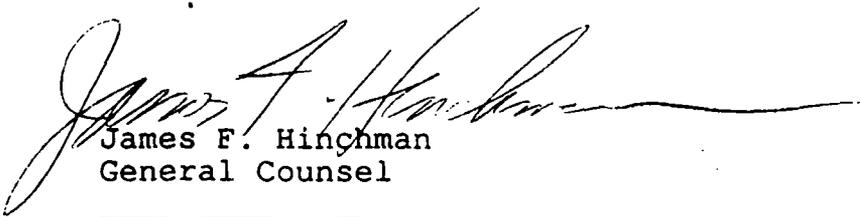
## DECISION

The question in this case is whether Mr. Earl J. Barlow may be reimbursed the cost of a non-refundable airline ticket which he purchased for vacation travel which he was not able to use because his scheduled annual leave was cancelled due to the press of government business.<sup>1/</sup> We find that reimbursement may not be authorized.

Mr. Barlow had scheduled annual leave for the week beginning May 28, 1990, which was approved. He also bought a non-refundable round-trip airline ticket from his duty station in Minneapolis, Minnesota, to Spokane, Washington, for \$364. Just before Mr. Barlow's travel was to commence, his leave was cancelled, and he was unable to use the ticket he had purchased because of the press of government business.

We have consistently held that purely personal expenses, such as forfeited hotel room deposits, dependents' travel costs, and increased costs for alternate flight reservations, do not become a government obligation upon the cancellation of approved annual leave and may not be reimbursed. John W. Keys III, 60 Comp. Gen. 629 (1981) and cases cited. Although Mr. Barlow may have acted prudently in making the lowest fare non-refundable reservation, we have found no law or regulation under which we may authorize payment to Mr. Barlow for the personal travel expense incurred.

Accordingly, Mr. Barlow may not be reimbursed the cost of his unused round-trip airline ticket.

  
James F. Hinchman  
General Counsel

<sup>1/</sup> The question was submitted by the Assistant Director of Administration for Financial Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior.

CIVILIAN PERSONNEL  
Leaves Of Absence  
Annual leave  
Cancellation  
Travel expenses  
Reimbursement