



United States  
General Accounting Office  
Washington, D.C. 20548

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Office of the General Counsel

B-271859

September 26, 1996

Mr. William Duff  
1560 Oneco Ave.  
Winter Park, FL 32789

Dear Mr. Duff:

This responds to your April 15, 1996, request that we relieve you of liability for the loss of \$107.25 which occurred while you were the disbursing officer aboard the USS Underwood. In accordance with Section 8.10 of title 7, GAO Policy and Procedures Manual for Guidance of Federal Agencies (copy enclosed), GAO does not review military disbursing officer physical loss relief requests on a case-by-case basis. The availability of relief is to be determined by the Secretary of Defense or the appropriate Secretary of the military department incurring the loss. See B-198451, Feb. 5, 1981.

Relief of military disbursing officers for physical losses is governed by 31 U.S.C. § 3527(b). Section 3527(b) requires that the Secretary of Defense or the appropriate Secretary of the military department determine that the loss (1) occurred in the line of duty, (2) without fault or negligence on the part of the disbursing officer, and (3) was not the result of an improper payment. In military physical loss relief requests in which these administrative determinations are made, the granting of relief follows automatically. In a 1981 letter, we advised the heads of military departments that they do not need to submit physical loss relief requests to GAO. B-198451, Feb. 5, 1981.

We suggest that you submit your request to the Secretary of the Navy.

Sincerely yours,

Gary L. Kepplinger  
Associate General Counsel

Enclosure

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**DIGEST**

Disbursing officer who requested relief under 31 U.S.C. § 3527(b) for the physical loss of \$107.25 was referred to the Secretary of the Navy. In accordance with Section 8.10 of title 7, GAO Policy and Procedures Manual for Guidance of Federal Agencies, GAO does not review military disbursing officer physical loss cases on a case-by-case basis.