Soldier claims bookkeeper robbed him while at war

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BRISBANE, Calif. (KGO) -- Prosecutors on the Peninsula are pressing charges against a bookkeeper, accused of stealing tens of thousands of dollars from a soldier serving in the Iraq War, but the bookkeeper's attorney says there was no embezzlement.

The soldier filed a report at the Brisbane Police Department after he returned from Iraq in 2008. He claimed the one man he trusted to take care for his finances and his home during his two-year-long deployment, swindled him. The soldier's wife died the year before and he said he had very few people he could trust.

The 61-year-old reservist gave Kenneth McCall, a 65-year-old bookkeeper, power of attorney. McCall was supposed to pay all of the bills while the soldier was in the Middle East for two years.

But when the soldier returned he noticed charges in stores like Comp USA, Petco, and Best Buy. In all, the soldier says McCall stole $30,000 from him, but McCall's attorney paints a very different picture. He says the two men were friends and that the soldier knew exactly where the money was going at all times.

"Most of these alleged personal expenses were for the household and the kids. Secondly, Mr. McCall had long been authorized, when the two of them were getting along, to take out loans for some personal expenses, which he then re-paid," said defense attorney David Cohen.

"People commit embezzlements, but to take advantage of somebody, No.1, who you place your trust in, and No. 2, the reason the person's absent is that they're fighting for their country, that strikes me as deplorable on an extra high level," said San Mateo County prosecutor Steve Wagstaffe.

The district attorney's office says McCall could face three years in prison if he's found guilty of embezzlement.

McCall's attorney says he is trying to get the whole case dismissed. He also says his client is thinking about filing a civil suit against the soldier for defamation, emotional distress, and pain and suffering.