Remarks of Jonathan V. Gould

Comptroller of the Currency

Association of Military Banks of America – Military Banking Summit 2026

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I am honored to be here today to speak to all of you who have not only served our country but help support the financial well-being of our military and veteran communities. Without the U.S. military, there would be no national banking system to keep safe, sound, and prosperous.

The needs of your communities can be complex, and like the needs of many bank customers, constantly evolving. We are working to ensure financial institutions can meet the needs of all Americans by embracing responsible innovation, strengthening supervision, and resetting the OCC's risk tolerance.

As Secretary Bessent has stated, delivering Parallel Prosperity on Main Street and Wall Street is vital. Main Street has been neglected and subject to overregulation from Washington. The OCC is uniquely positioned to enable this vision given the breadth and depth of what we do as an agency: the largest institution we supervise is 100,000 times the size of the smallest.

That breadth is important because a strong national banking system must work for institutions of every size, serving communities with very different needs. A large bank and a small military bank may operate on very different scales, but both play an important role in supporting the financial strength of our nation. And both deserve a supervisory framework that allows them to serve their customers, manage their risks, and grow responsibly.

Unfortunately, due to short-sighted policies adopted in the wake of the Great Financial Crisis, more than half of community banks have closed their doors or been absorbed by mergers and acquisitions since 2008. That is why the OCC today is working to deliver a Community Bank Comeback for institutions such as yours.

The Community Bank Comeback is about restoring the conditions that allow community banks to succeed. It is about recognizing that sound supervision and a healthy banking system are not objectives that can be achieved by subjecting all banks to the same standards.

We recognize that your banks are the lifeblood of the Main Street economy. You are responsible for providing small businesses and hardworking families across the country with the financial services they need to access the world's greatest economy. And we are committed to making it easier for you to do exactly that.

For military banks, that responsibility carries a particular significance. The men and women who serve our country, and the families who stand behind them, deserve access to financial institutions that understand their circumstances. Whether it is supporting a servicemember through a permanent change of station, helping a military family purchase a home, or providing veterans with the financial services they need as they transition to civilian life, your institutions understand the communities you serve. A Community Bank Comeback must include the institutions that have made that commitment to our military community.

We are working to reduce burden and tailor supervision for community banks. Our recent actions on capital, examination cycles, third-party risk management, and supervisory standards are already reaping tangible benefits, with an estimated $64 billion in capital freed up to be deployed in communities across the country. We have no intention of slowing down.

When community banks are able to put their capital and resources to productive use, the benefits extend well beyond the institutions themselves. They reach the families, small businesses, and communities that depend on them. That is what the Community Bank Comeback is ultimately about.

For your specific institutions, other efforts include providing transparency and clarity through the proposed new definition of "military bank" in the Community Reinvestment Act reform. The comment period on the proposal is still currently open. We encourage your feedback.

Your perspective is especially valuable as we undertake this work. The institutions represented here understand firsthand the unique needs of military communities and the practical implications of our regulatory framework. We want to hear from you about what is working, where unnecessary obstacles remain, and how we can ensure our rules recognize the important role military banks play in the communities they serve.

I would also be remiss if I didn't add that the OCC has benefited greatly from the veteran community. Nearly one tenth of our workforce has served or is currently serving. They come to work each day with the same tireless devotion to our mission as they did when they wore a uniform in service of our nation. They continue to be a crucial piece in safeguarding our American Way of life. Thank you to them and to all veterans here today for your service.

I look forward to today's conversation.