Offutt personnel enter damaged base facilities, flood recovery efforts continue

Team Offutt members clear debris from one of the docks at the Bennie L. Davis Maintenance Facility on March 21, 2019. Offutt AFB personnel have regained access to buildings and facilities to begin assessing damage and recovering items that were underwater less than a week ago from massive flooding in the area. (Photo by Charles Haymond)

From 55th Wing Public Affairs staff reports

Offut Air Force Base, Neb. — Team Offutt personnel have regained access to buildings and facilities to begin assessing damage and recovering items that were underwater less than a week ago from massive flooding in the area.

More than 20 buildings have been cleared for initial disaster recovery efforts, through a safe and methodical approach.

"The weather has really been in our favor and we are taking full advantage by moving as quickly as we can to properly clear facilities for entry," said Col. Michael Manion, 55th Wing commander. "Our bio-environmental and civil engineer teams, along with Offutt Fire and Rescue, have done an amazing job throughout this process."

The ongoing efforts are led by the newly stood-up Recovery Operations Center (ROC). This team is made up of professionals from across the wing focused on not only clearing facilities, but also getting displaced personnel in other facilities around the base to ensure the mission continues.

"The ROC essentially took over the recovery efforts from the Emergency Operations Center, which had been operating since we first learned of the potential for flooding," said Lt. Col Vance Goodfellow, ROC director. "This team is more streamlined with regard to subject-matter experts who can make things happen quickly to ensure our recovery efforts don't miss a beat."

The runway is also now clear of water and debris and is undergoing a thorough evaluation to ensure flight operations can resume safely.

"Everything we are doing is with safety in mind," Manion said. "Obviously, our Warhawks are eager to begin flying operations from Offutt, but we want to make sure everything is safe before we start doing that."

The commander praised the members of the 55th Wing as well as those other units effected by the flood for their resiliency.

"I've just been in awe of how everyone has responded to this natural disaster," Manion said. "I'm truly blessed to serve with these patriots who continue to amaze me daily with their resilience and can-do attitude."

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