Announcer: The Missouri State Journal, a weekly program keeping you in touch with Missouri State University.

Emily Yeap: This past summer, Missouri State University student Madeline Hayes embarked on a journey she would never forget. She left the comforts of home to help those who are suffering in one of the world's most dangerous cities - Mosul, Iraq. A senior nursing major, Hayes spent a month in Mosul with Free Burma Rangers (FBR), a humanitarian service movement founded by David Eubank, a former U.S. Special Forces operative. FBR provides aid in the conflict areas of Burma, Iraq and Sudan. Her dad, Tim Hayes, a local lawyer and ex-military man, had made six trips to Mosul with FBR and connected her with the organization. I'm Emily Yeap. Hayes joins me today to share more about her life-changing adventure.

Madeline Hayes: When we pulled up to Mosul, it was very dark. It's crazy to see how spiritual darkness not only affects people and their actions, but also just how Mosul looked. It was just dark. We stayed in an abandoned IDP's home. An IDP is someone who couldn’t leave Iraq. The house was just totally trashed because before we got there that part of Mosul was taken by ISIS and during the fight, they go into the people's homes and just totally trash it. We set up a clinic outside the home and it was just basic things like antibiotics, blood pressure medication, diabetes medications, taking care of basic needs like wound care from mortars. We handed out water and food and medicine.

Emily Yeap: Hayes also got to put her nursing skills into practice at the casualty collection point on the front lines with Iraqi doctors and medics.

Madeline Hayes: That was a really interesting experience and I probably got the best medical experience there. I took care of civilians and soldiers who were wounded by ISIS through either gunshot or mortars, explosions. They had severe burns, chemical weapon patients and kids just peppered in shrapnel. The CCP was in three different locations. It moved depending on where the front line was pushing. It seemed like every day there were people dying. Some days were not too bad, but then other days you're taking care of all these patients on the bed and then there's patients on the floor who are bleeding out.

Emily Yeap: One incident is etched in her memory forever.

Madeline Hayes: A girl came in and she was about 13-years-old. She was shot in femoral artery. I did CPR on her for about five minutes and put my stethoscope to her chest and heard nothing and she left in a black body bag. That was the first time that someone died in front of me there. During that moment, I was like “Do I want this occupation that I just carry people into death?” But it's an honor to be able to take care of people during that moment and during those hard times.

Emily Yeap: Although she had close calls with two suicide bombers and an ISIS chemical attack, it did not deter Hayes from completing her service.

Madeline Hayes: I just saw those people and saw that they needed me and that was what I was focused on was helping them, being the best nurse I could be for them, and trying to save their life. I just chose to trust God because I knew obviously that that's the direction he was leading me in.

Emily Yeap: The experience has given her a deeper appreciation for the freedoms enjoyed in the United States and changed her outlook on life.

Madeline Hayes: Before Mosul, I would just stress about boys, getting my job, and what clothes am I going to wear, just obsessing about such material things. Then, you go into literally, Mosul is the closest thing to hell. After that, I was just like no matter what happens, I'm going to be fine and I want to think about things greater than just myself and worry more about how can I help other people. I know that sounds cliché, but how can I make the biggest difference while I'm here on Earth.

Emily Yeap: Hayes also now knows what she wants to do after graduation.

Madeline Hayes: I'm looking into Navy or Air Force nursing, which is something I never thought I would do, so that's something I got out of Mosul.

Emily Yeap: Hayes knows most people can't help in Mosul directly, but she urges everyone to care about what's happening and to do something such as donating to FBR.

Madeline Hayes: When you do know about what's going on over there, we all have a moral obligation to do something about it, whether it's in word or action.

Emily Yeap: To find out more about FBR or to donate, visit freeburmarangers.org. I'm Emily Yeap for The Missouri State Journal.

Announcer: For more information, contact the Office of University Communications at 417-836-6397. The Missouri State Journal is available online at ksmu.org.