

January 2024



# Postcards to the Front

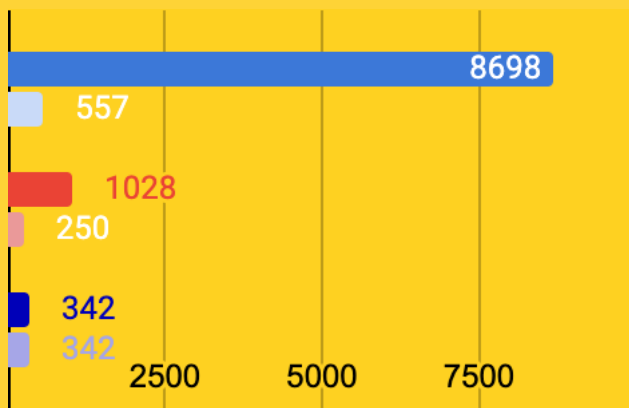
## International Newsletter

Ukraine  
Australia  
Canada  
United Kingdom



Volume 1  
Issue 6

### A Month in Postcards



This month our postcard warriors from Australia sent 557 cards, from Canada sent 250 cards, and from the UK sent 342 cards. Australia's total sent is now 8,698 cards, Canada's total sent is now 1,028, and UK's total sent is 342.

Please keep the cards coming; the Defenders will treasure them!

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# About

*Postcards to the Front International Newsletter* is a monthly publication of the project **Postcards to the Front**. Founded by three Ukrainian women shortly after Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the idea of sending messages of support and encouragement to the frontline Defenders of Ukraine spread out on [Postcrossing.com](https://www.postcrossing.com) – an international postcard exchange platform. Branches of *Postcards to the Front* have been established in Australia, Canada and United Kingdom.

Defender personnel, including medics, mechanics, drivers, cooks, etc., receive postcards in their care packages. While each bit of happy mail makes a huge difference in the psychological well-being of the front line Defenders, messages and pictures from children are especially heartwarming. Your support makes a difference. Thank you!

The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author, and not the opinion of this newsletter nor affiliated websites. Authors take responsibility for correct citations of sources and references, both oral and text.

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# We're Growing!

By Helen

Plathy had already sent some cards to Ukraine's Defenders, but then ... a little butterfly flapped its wings in Costa Rica – in the shape of two young boys.

A member of Postcrossing, Plathy read on the Postcrossing site that brothers Aloy and Edu were planning to write 100 cards to Ukraine. So, she thought, "if two kids can do this, so can I!"

And since, she's decided to set up a United Kingdom (UK) branch of *Postcards to the Front*.

Welcome aboard Plathy and the UK branch!

To begin, Plathy wanted to use cards that were "just right" for Defenders, so created her own version of "Keep Calm and Carry On" cards. Each card is written in Ukrainian which, she says, took "a lot of trial and practice, [and] I managed to get 88 good cards."



Figure 1: Postcard created by Plathy

Since sending those first cards, Plathy now buys cards from local tourist shops with images that show a little about the area. She believes that "the message is the most important. Even if we have to make them for now. There should be no expense; i.e., anyone posting us material. That defeats the purpose."

Plathy's process to establish a branch in the UK, and to encourage involvement of UK postcard warriors, mirrors that of the branches in Australia and Canada. Although, she has no plans for a website, as she says local people find her quite easily to give her postcards for Ukraine.

"People around me just either give them to me or post them through my letterbox," she told us. As well, she shares her address with people on Postcrossing, via private messages.

Still, as Plathy says, "It's really early days."

Her small team is "made up of my family, my sister, my husband and our guarding angel hiding inside a French cat called Charlie."

When Plathy found out that Peter, Australia's *Postcards to the Front* branch ambassador, had a dog on his team also called Charlie, "I thought it was not a coincidence. I am hoping to print postcards with both mascots. Maybe with a Ukrainian sentence at the front."

That was then, when we interviewed Plathy. Since then, she *has* created a two Charlies postcard! (Please see the following two images.)



**Шановний Захисник!**

**Кота Чарлі знайшли у Франції та відвезли до Іспанії. Він є талісманом листівок «Поштові картки на фронт», Великобританія.**

**Собака Чарлі є талісманом листівок «Листівки на фронт», Австралія.**

**Вони дарують тобі всю любов світу і хочуть сказати, що ми все ще за тобою. Ми справді пишаємося вами. Ми молимося, щоб ваша боротьба дійсно скоро закінчилася.**

Figure 2: The two Charlies postcard created by Plathy



Figure 3: English translation of Ukrainian text in the preceding page

Canada branch doesn't have a mascot, but does have a family of eight wild turkeys gobbling about the abutting woods!

During the Christmas season, Plathy wanted to do more, so she reached out to the [Yorkshire Aid Convoy](#), which sends supplies by truck to Ukraine every few months. Learning what was needed, Plathy and her husband collected teddy bears, toiletries, books, games,

bedding, clothes, shoes, medicine, baby gear ... all sorts. She received support from local supermarkets and charity shops, noting that she “was overwhelmed with their generosity. My friends and neighbours have donated amazing items.”

As Plathy sees it, sending postcards to Ukraine’s Defenders is more than moral support for Ukraine. She believes that the project serves a crucial purpose in helping to keep the Ukraine dialogue current – outside Ukraine.

“That’s why I thought it is important to have a presence of *Postcards to the Front* in the UK; because, eventually, this little butterfly flapping its wings, will cause the tornado which will topple “He Whose Name We Will NOT Mention”.

What’s next for Plathy? She’s “really excited to announce that I have my first school where children are going to write cards.”

These days, Plathy reflects a lot “on what it actually means to receive such a card. If it was me, I would carry that card with me all the time. I have been saying to people: ‘It’s a tiny piece of paper that might just save someone’s life’, because when a Defender might see no way out, this bit of paper might give them that bit of energy to carry on to safety. Never give up.”

Every postcard warrior has their reasons for writing messages of support to Ukraine. Ultimately, Plathy believes that each postcard represents Love. And, “Love is more powerful than hate and violence,” she reminds us.

“Eventually, we will win this fight.”



***Love is more powerful than hate and violence.  
Eventually, we will win this fight.***

— Plathy, *Postcards to the Front* UK Ambassador

# Australia Branch News and Updates

By Peter

Is 10,000 cards a possibility?

*Postcards to the Front Australia* sent our first package of cards to Tamara on the 14th of March 2023.

I am writing this article on the 25th of January and our total cards sent figure is 8,698. I am assuming you will be reading this on the 2nd of February and also assuming that we will get another 40 cards by the end of this month.

If my assumptions are correct it would mean that when you read this we would need to get 1,262 cards to reach 10,000 cards in a year.

So between 2 Feb and 13th March there are 23 working days. Take out 3 days for cards getting here and we have 20 days to get to 10,000 cards for a full 12 months of operations.

Our best 2 months ever were May & June 2023 when we averaged 51 & 42 cards a day.

To hit 10,000 cards in the 20 days I am talking about we would need 63 cards a day. Difficult, but not impossible.

If we don't hit 10,000 cards in a full year nothing will change, eventually we will get to 10,000. It is however intriguing to think about this figure.

Anyway Anne will donate a box set of cards to whoever sends the 10,000th card whenever that happens.



Figure 4: We eat, sleep and dream of Ukraine's victory

# Canada Branch News and Updates

By Helen

We are grateful to the many Canadians who send cards each month with messages of support for Ukraine's Defenders.

Every written card has a story behind it. Some writers tell us that they have roots in Ukraine. Others are appalled by the senselessness of Russia's aggression. All writers hope that their words of compassion and support will make a difference in a Defender's hard day.

And this we know: *every* card has heartfelt value to recipients in Ukraine.

This month, Canada branch celebrates a milestone: over 1,000 cards have been sent to Ukraine's Defenders. Well done postcard warriors!

Thank you to all who have joined us in this project of care and hope.



Figure 5: Chickadee by Manitoba photographer, Doug Lauvstad

January highlights for Canada branch include two batches of beautiful cards with sincere messages of care and love from people in the community of **The Pas, Manitoba**.

And what a beautiful black-capped chickadee photo on the cards, the image donated by Manitoba photographer [Doug Lauvstad](#)! In Europe and elsewhere, the chickadee might more commonly be called a tit.

Found all across Canada, this tiny songbird is resilient, and cleverly remembers where it stores food for harsh times. It's also a social bird, forming flocks with other species; especially, in winter.

One might observe some parallels with Ukrainians: resilient, clever, get along with others.



Meanwhile, closer to our Millbrook, Ontario home base, we had an overflowing house at [Oshawa Museum](#) where members of Oshawa's Ukrainian community joined us for a postcard-writing workshop. From ages 2-92, they came in from the cold after their weekly bridge demonstration at Albert Street, Oshawa, over Highway 401, about 60km east of Toronto. They earnestly and sincerely offered Defenders love, care, hope and energy, on their postcard messages. Energy and strength to sustain through to the goal of victory. The majority of messages were written in Ukrainian.

A batch of cards was taken from this session to the Monday evening classes of the [Oshawa Odessa Dancers](#); youth celebrating their cultural roots through dance. The young dancers wrote powerful messages of compassion and encouragement to those in Ukraine defending their roots, such as –

*Thank you for defending a country I love, though I have never been ...*

*Thank you for protecting Ukraine. Be strong and stay safe.*

Outcomes from the Oshawa Museum workshop include two postcard-writing workshops scheduled for February at Oshawa churches, as well as plans to join the February 24 **National Call to Stand With Ukraine**. This date marks the second anniversary since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. We at *Postcards to the Front (Canada / Канада)* #standwithUkraine!

Further away from home base, our Arizona, USA friend, Marcus, sent a staggering 100 cards that arrived in the New Year. He writes pithy messages and some quotes on his cards, such as:

*Ukraine without her soldiers is like God without his angels.*

*You got this.*

*Victory will be Yours!*

*Your flag is more than just cloth and ink. It is a symbol that stands for liberty and freedom and is marked by the blood of those who died defending it. Victory will be yours!*

*The opportunity of defeating your enemy is provided by the enemy himself. –  
Sun Tzu*

Thank you, Marcus, for your continued support!



***Need some cards to write to Defenders?*** We can send you blank *Canada supports Ukraine* cards for you to write back. FREE! Design by Ukrainian artist, Viktoriia Shepel (@vectra\_pictures). [Email us](#) your request.

And, please ... share our website as widely as you can – [postcardstothefrontcanada.com](http://postcardstothefrontcanada.com). Please click “Subscribe” on our website. You'll get up-to-date news and information about this project. Ask family and friends to write cards. Maybe you want to organize a postcard-writing bee? Check our website for tips, [How to Organize a Postcard-Writing Workshop](#).

### **Remind Members of Parliament of your support for Ukraine**

With the 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine upcoming on February 24<sup>th</sup>, we can remind our Parliamentarians that Canadians continue to support Ukraine, and that we wish our government to continue to stand in solidarity with Ukraine’s battle for democracy, freedom, and preservation of culture.

*How?* Write to your local Member of Parliament asking for their continued support of Ukraine. Not sure what to write? Try a clear, direct and brief approach explaining why you support Ukraine, and why Canada should continue to support Ukraine.

Want to address the specific need for Canada to support current and future economic resilience in Ukraine? Below is a sample letter that addresses this topic, currently undergoing Third Reading in the House of Commons. That is, Bill C-57, the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement.

You can find your MP by postal code here: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/members/en>

MPs email addresses are [Firstname.Lastname@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Firstname.Lastname@parl.gc.ca)

**Sample email, or phone message –**

Dear [NAME OF YOUR MP]

As your constituent, I urge you to stand with Ukraine, as I do through such actions as [describe how you support Ukraine].

For nearly two years, the Ukrainian people have courageously defended their country, and freedom in Europe, from Russia's attack.

We need to stay united and to strongly support Ukraine.

To defeat Russia, Ukraine needs help to build economic resilience now, and into the future, through tools like free trade agreements.

The modernization of the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement was negotiated by Canada and Ukraine and will lead to increased trade and economic ties between our two countries.

The bill implementing the modernization agreement, Bill C-57, will be coming up for a vote in 3rd reading soon.

**As your constituent, I urge you to stand with Ukraine and support Bill C-57.**

Thank you, and I look forward to hearing from you where you stand, in relation to Ukraine; specifically, do you support Bill C-57? If not, why not?

[YOUR SIGNATURE]



**Upcoming Events**

**> Toronto Postcard Club, Sunday, February 18, 2024**

Helen will share with members of the Toronto Postcard Club the story of how Canada branch of *Postcards to the Front* was established. She will also discuss how postcards make

a difference in Ukraine. You can learn more about the Toronto Postcard Club event [here](#). Already, the Postcard Club has donated postage stamps to sponsor 15 packages of postcards to Ukraine. Thank you!



Recapping our gritudes:

- We are grateful to the many children and youth whose text and visual messages express compassionate care and support to Ukraine's Defenders.
- Thank you to those who have sent us postage stamps. Every stamp carries a whole lot of love and care to women and men on the front lines who need extra doses. A postal hug. We could use some more! Stamps, and hugs! ;-)
- We are grateful to all of you who have written cards and who have spread the word about *Postcards to the Front* to others. These connections help our efforts to support Ukraine. One Canadian postcard warrior recently told us that she first noticed about *Postcards to the Front* from a poster about workshops that we held in Merrickville, Ontario – last September.



**Remember: your cards do make a difference** ... as Danylo tells us from the front lines in Ukraine –



***Nothing warms the soldiers' heart as a handwritten letter.***



— Defender Danylo

Do you have questions? Do you have unused stamps to pass along to our team (we could use some!)? Or blank cards? Have some written cards ready for us to send on to Ukraine? Please see the [contact section](#) for our email and postal address.

***Thank you for your continued support of Defenders of Ukraine!***

***And Best Wishes to you for a healthy and calm 2024***

# Let's write some Ukrainian!

By Tamara

*Editor's note: Try one, or a couple, of these Ukrainian phrases on your cards. We especially like the first one because ... well, Valentine's Day is in February, and what better time to express our forever friendship with Ukraine?!*

Friends forever друзі назавжди

We are together ми разом

Bless Ukraine Благослови Україну

We read a lot about Ukraine Ми багато читаємо про Україну

I love borscht Я люблю борщ

I wish you a victory Бажаю вам перемоги

## ***How some of our best friends show their support for Ukraine –***

Many postcard warriors have expressed concern for the welfare of animals in Ukraine who, like their humans, have been profoundly affected by the war. Yes, pets, livestock and wild animals are in crisis, too. Here, we have a beautiful gallery of Australian dogs, demonstrating explicit support for Ukraine!

And, might we add ... *Don't they look rather dashing?*



# My Ukraine Story

**By Libby**, proud postcard warrior

Although my story doesn't directly relate to being a postcard warrior, it is a story about Ukraine, how I've fallen in love with the country and its people, and what I've devoted my time to over the past two years in order to make a small difference in a big war ...

The story starts, as you'd expect, with Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February, 2022. I watched, like many others, as millions of Ukrainians fled to Poland with next to nothing. I was compelled to take action and wrote to the Polish Embassy in Australia asking what I could do. They advised me to look at a website the Polish government had set up which detailed ways to help.

Eventually, I connected with four charities and started putting together care packages consisting of toiletries, underwear, socks, beanies, gloves, scarves, and a few Australian things, such as Caramello Koala chocolates and koala sleep masks . I also included letters (in English and in Ukrainian) to women and children, expressing my support for them and their country and assuring them that although we were miles away, we were thinking of them, and stood with them (the same things I write now in my postcards).



Figure 6: One of the very first parcels I sent, filled with blankets, socks, toiletries, sanitisers, etc



Figure 7: Packaged up and ready to go, decorated to show my support

My focus gradually moved from sending items that addressed immediate needs, to supporting children with their psychosocial care through toys and books. I built a relationship with one charity in particular, a not-for-profit in Krakow that had pivoted to



Figure 8: Scouring every store I could find for Aussie gifts that would put a smile on children's faces

support displaced Ukrainians through the provision of groceries, clothing, employment and housing. I scoured every Kmart, Big W and Target store that I could find for Aussie animal soft toys, books, colouring books, etc.

Eventually, the Polish government cracked down on what they considered humanitarian aid, and I had to stop. But because I still had loads of gifts and still really wanted to get them there, I approached my Mum with a crazy idea in late 2022.

“Let’s go to Vienna to see family, and while we’re in Europe, let’s also go to Krakow and deliver presents!”

I also decided we should travel to Romania to do the same thing with Caritas international aid organization. We left Australia with 105kg of goods between us! Suffice to say, both organizations were incredibly excited to receive the gifts.

I decided to go back to Europe again over the recent holiday break and added Krakow to my itinerary. Not only because I love the city, but I also intended to visit the charity again with more gifts.



Figure 10: Our hotel room in Krakow, ready to deliver some of the 105kg of goodies

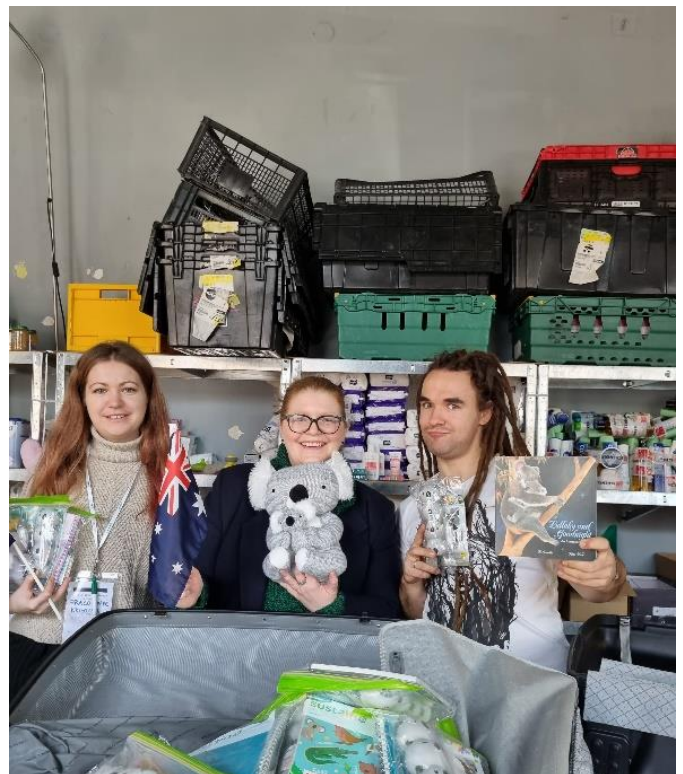


Figure 9: Happy volunteers at the charity in Krakow

Then, I got to thinking ... *wouldn't it be wonderful if I could get gifts directly to children in Ukraine?*



Figure 11: Janice, co-founder of Care in Action, very excited to receive the gifts

As Munich, in Germany, was my first stop, I researched charities there that supported Ukraine and found [Care in Action](#), which was founded 25 years ago to improve the lives of children in orphanages. I reached out to them explaining who I was and what I wanted to do, and was invited to the home of the woman who established the organisation, alongside her late husband.

Janice lived a 45-minute train ride south of Munich and so on my last day in the city, I set off with my huge suitcase full of toys and other gifts. I had a wonderful day with Janice, learning all about the work *Care in Action* does. She explained that my presents would make their way to Ukraine and be given to children in foster care. I'm happy to say that the first of the parcels have been delivered and I couldn't be more thrilled.

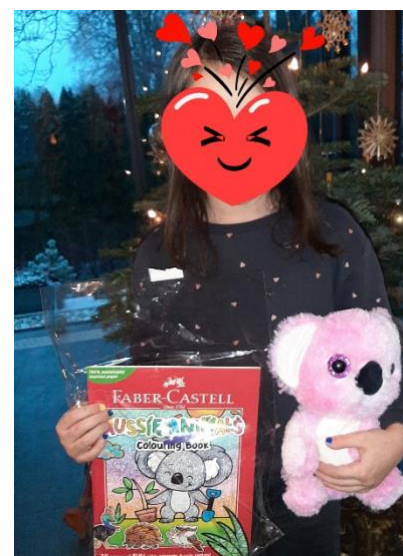


Figure 12: Some of the presents already made their way to Lviv, this little girl is in a foster family



Figure 13: Anna's daughter reading my letter in Warsaw

There's another aspect to my story that I also want to share, and that is how I came to befriend a family from Dnipro.

Anna left Ukraine with her two children soon after the war began and moved to Warsaw, while her husband stayed home to fight for their country. Anna visited a Ukrainian aid centre where she was given some of my gifts, which included a letter I had written to the recipient. In the letter, I gave my Facebook details, and soon after they read it, Anna sent me a lovely message from her, and one from her 12-year-old daughter who drew me the most wonderful picture of a cat – because she had seen on Facebook that I



had four! Our friendship grew from there and continues, even after Anna and her children moved back to Dnipro.

Still, I was fortunate to later meet with them in Warsaw during another trip to Poland, as they had travelled back to Warsaw to visit friends.

It was an extraordinary time, meeting Anna, her daughter, and her 5-year-old son. Although we had only chatted on Facebook up until then, there was an instant connection, as we shared a wonderful evening at a Ukrainian restaurant. I brought gifts for the kids and also some for their family and friends who lived in their village.



Figure 14: Meeting Anna's kids in Warsaw

On my most recent trip, I decided to send more Christmas presents. Gifts for children, books for their library, gift bags for soldiers, and a few packs that I made up for newborns. And, lots of letters. Navigating the postal system while not able to speak Polish has been an interesting experience, and I'm so pleased to say that all packages arrived in Ukraine, within just a few days! That sure beats Australia Post! Anna played Santa, handing out the many gifts.



Figure 19: Individual gift packs for soldiers

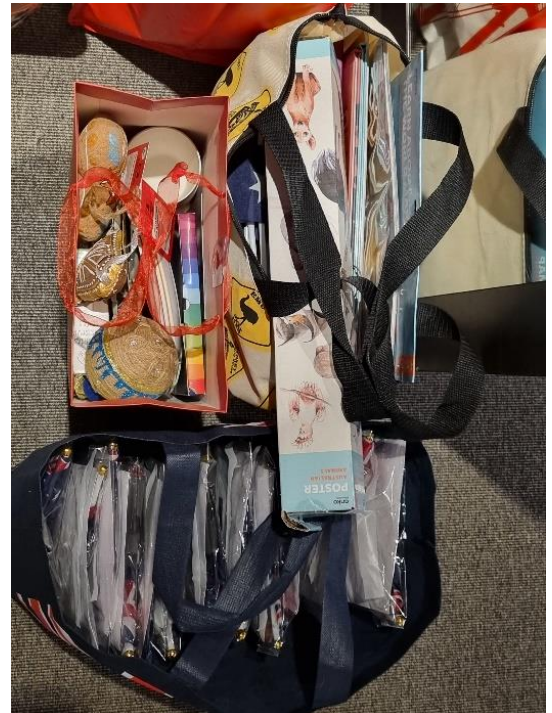


Figure 18: Goodies for soldiers, a local library and Anna's family



Figure 17: Presents for children in Anna's village



Figure 16: A happy Anna receiving my parcels



Figure 15: A gift for a mum and newborn

I've also told Anna all about *Postcards to the Front* and sent her photos of the postcards that I've written, that my friends' kids have written, as well as the Christmas cards my Mum wrote. Her response made me very emotional, as she simply said "This gives us power".

Anna reaffirmed what we hear through anecdotes and what we read in this newsletter: ***every postcard we send is really making a difference.***

And that is where my focus is going to be this year. Sending as many postcards as I can to continue to make a small difference in this big war. Until Ukraine is victorious. Because they will be. They have to be.



Figure 23: My mum writing Christmas cards last year



Figure 22: My friend's kids did a wonderful job writing out postcards



Figure 21: Some of my postcards



Figure 20: More postcards from the kids

# Courage and the Invasion of Ukraine

**By Corrinne Colbert**, supporter of *Postcards to the Front*  
MVA 1<sup>st</sup> class Honours, BFA Queensland College of Art, Griffith University

Why the surprise? Totalitarian states like Russia think they are superior or, as Putin said, invincible (internet source Sep 4, 2023). Are we shocked that our sophisticated Western thinking did not prevent the invasion of Ukraine? Do we imagine something other than violence? Or invasion by a military power?

The author Maurits De Jongh writes “...we are in a state of discomfort. This discomfort touches on a deeper disorientation affecting the rich, free countries of the West. We hardly find salvation in our conspicuousness and our obsession with social climbing. We continually fall short in our solidarity with one another, let alone with the rest of the world. (Philosophy Now magazine, April-May 2023, p33).

Greg Sheridan, (Australian Newspaper, 22/07/23) quotes Giorgia Melonithe, Prime Minister of Italy as saying ...we don't stand with Ukraine because we like war. We stand with Ukraine because what we want to defend is stronger than the fear of war.” He also quotes the English writer J.R.R. Tolkien, who wrote in *The Two Towers*, “I do not love the bright sword for its sharp edge nor the arrow for its swiftness nor the warrior for his glory. I only love that which I defend.”

Hannah Arendt, the American-based philosopher, noted that the people of Ukraine took up resistance to the invasion by Russia in February 2022 when their leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy declared to the Americans, *I need ammunition, not a ride*, when they offered to get him out of the country. This declaration of courage by the leader and, subsequently, taken on by the citizens of Ukraine, is beyond doubt.

***We stand with Ukraine because what we want to defend is stronger than the fear of war.***

— Giorgia Melonithe,  
Prime Minister of Italy

So then we are left wondering how does the question of courage find meaning?

Once again Hannah Arendt offers insight when she insists that courage takes no interest in our psychological states; instead, it finds meaning in care for the world and for the sake of humanity; requiring self-sacrifice. (*Philosophy Now* magazine, April-May 2023, p33).

De Jongh again argues, “the defence of their country, land, culture and freedom, against a totalitarian state is the story of courage to remind us it is outright perverse for us to use it in the satisfaction of our own psychological needs.” (*Philosophy Now* magazine, April-May 2023, p33).

The West is searching for a return to solidarity and unity with one another through the courage that Ukraine is teaching us.

### ***Valentines for Vets & for Ukraine’s Defenders***



One of our postcard warriors suggested that February is a great month to send messages of love and support to Ukraine’s Defenders AND to Canadian Veterans! One way to thank them for their service, and to show them that you appreciate all they do.

Veterans Affairs Canada has just the right postcards that you can send. And they’re FREE! Click [here](#) to choose your cards and to place your order. You can choose from “Saluting”, “Poppies”, “Medals”, or “Boots”.

Canada branch ordered some of the cards last autumn for workshops in the classroom; students wrote cards to Canadian Veterans and to Ukraine’s Defenders. Similarly, we’ve ordered some for postcard-writing workshops that we’ll be running through the month of February. And who knows ... if we have any left over, the gratitude, love, and support will continue into March!

**So, .... this Valentine’s Day**, thank Canadian Veterans and Ukrainian Defenders by sending them a valentine. Let them know that you recognize and appreciate their service!