



Postcards to the Front

International Newsletter

October 2023

Ukraine

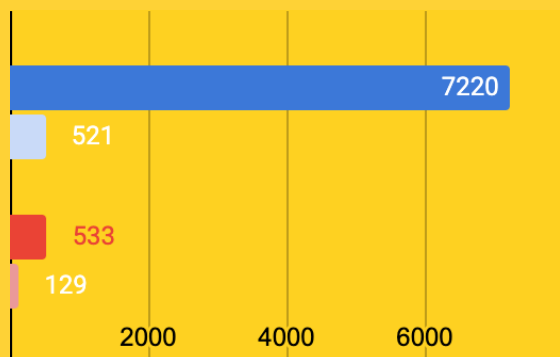
Australia

Canada



Volume 1, Issue 3

A Month in Postcards



This month our postcard warriors from Australia sent 521 cards and from Canada sent 129 cards. Australia's total (including the Christmas cards) sent is now 7220 cards and Canada's total sent is now 533.

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 and Canada.

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!

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The ray of sunshine in the kingdom of darkness

By Helen

When the postcards arrive at the front lines, the excitement and read-alouds begin. Yes, they swap and share. Yes, they tell their friends and families.

Just like troops have for centuries.

Whether it was the armies of ancient Egypt around 2000 BCE receiving mail during their campaigns, or Edward IV stationing the Royal Post in Scotland to support his troops in the 15th Century, or the earliest post office established for military mail in 1885 in Canada, at Swift Current – it has long been known that *mail is an important morale booster for troops*.



After the postcards are distributed, read aloud, swapped, then returned to the ‘owner’, Defender Danylo told us, “I keep the cards with me. ... they make me feel warm.”



Figure 1: Danylo at the front, sorting cards.

He emphasized that the cards “make my day. When they arrive, everybody feels happy, and nothing warms the soldiers’ heart as a handwritten letter.”

Words and warmth.

Defender Vadym amplifies that the postcards “make us calm and motivated ... the darkest day would be a bit brighter”, because “somebody hand wrote their sincere support to us.” As well, he added, “it’s a pleasure for my relatives” knowing that others support them.

Danylo agreed. “I tell my mom and friends about the postcards and how they make us feel warm.”

“Every card,” Vadym stated, “is a ray of sunshine in the kingdom of darkness.”

Danylo described how postcards serve as one way to counter the darkness. “Every dramatic experience, every dark and cold night, every fight and every loss is overcome by reading and remembering that there is somebody waiting for you somewhere in the Big Land. It’s good to know that somebody is always near,” by postcard proxy.



When asked what more postcard warriors could do, Vadym passionately appealed, “Please spread your love across all brigades ... [they are] the top morale booster. Every soldier appreciates [the cards] and [is] waiting for such a postcard ... a personal treasure. Please continue sharing your free-hearted thoughts.”

Further, Danylo adds, “everybody wants to know more about civil life; ... what’s happening in [the outer world].”

After all, the Defenders had inner and outer worlds that did not include battles and wounds and loss. When asked about his favourite books, Danylo shared that from his childhood they were *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, by Gabriel Garcia Márquez, and *Little Prince*, by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. Presently, he is reading *Battlegrounds: The Fight to Defend the Free World*, by Herbert McMaster.

Not light reading!

Danylo’s favourite song is the soulful *House of the Rising Sun*, by *The Animals*.

And then, he gets cheekily – and bravely – philosophical, quoting from the film, *The Big Lebowski*: “Sometimes you eat the bear, and sometimes, well, he eats you.” Translation: you win some, you lose some.



Please spread your love across all brigades ... [the cards are] the top morale booster. Every soldier appreciates the cards and is waiting for such a postcard.

— Defender Vadym

Vadym's favourite book is *Brave New World*, by Aldous Huxley, whom he credits as being among the first to "make me think about the true life values."

Particularly, he can't imagine his life without music, citing his favourite song as *Behind blue eyes*, by *The Who*, and his favourite quotes coming from the world of music. From *Iron Maiden* – "We won't live to fight another day" – and from an old Ukrainian reggae band "There won't be tomorrow, it was yesterday". A long hard time defending one's country surely can make one melancholic and feeling alone.

That is why postcards with messages of support matter. Both Danylo and Vadym plead: "Please remember that we are here, defending our homes."

With Danylo adding that "The hell around is not eternal, ... we have a place to return."

Home.

Until then, it's easy to send some light into the darkness. Postcards let Ukraine's Defenders and their families know that we care. That we haven't forgotten.



You can get up to five cards in one envelope with domestic postage. Please write a few and send them to either Australia branch, or to Canada branch. They **will** get to Ukraine's Defenders. UkrPoshta is doing a great job keeping the mail going, even as couriers must dodge bullets, missiles and mines.

If you don't have any postcards, contact either branch. We can send blank cards to you to write.

Every card boosts morale and is cherished. Your message of support is a personal connection that informs Ukraine's Defenders that their service is appreciated, and that we care; that we haven't forgotten their fight for freedom.



The hell around is not eternal, ... we have a place to return.

— Defender Danylo

Did you know ...

By Tamara and Linda

Did you know that Ukraine's coat of arms – trident – has a few dozens of interpretations, however the most popular says that the Ukrainian word **воля** / **freedom** is hidden there? In Ukraine, we believe it's the biggest achievement of any nation, that's why we defend it so much.

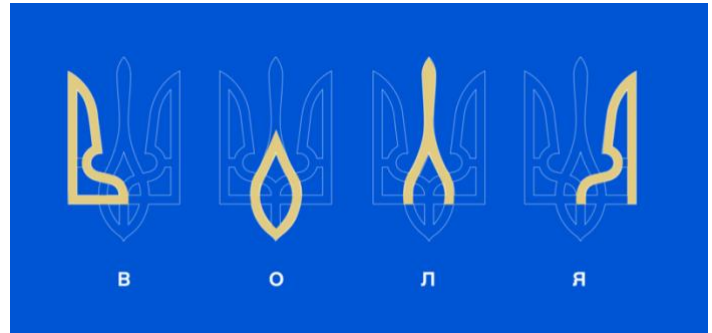


Figure 2: Image taken from weareukraine.info.

In our newsletter, the trident was chosen as the text divider for its symbolic and aesthetic strength. While designing it, our layout editor Linda had the idea of making the long segment look like the blade of a sword, while the diamond-circle part makes up the handle of the sword – all of these echo with the imagery of a trident as a powerful weapon for self-defence and symbol of invincibility.

Dignity and Freedom Day (November 21) was first celebrated in Ukraine in 2014, marking the first anniversary of pro-European Union mass protests. November 21st was declared the official national day of observance in 2016.

Ukraine's journey to independence began in 1991 with the break-up of the former Soviet Union. Notable growing pains included the 2004 *Orange Revolution* protests which were a response to perceived electoral fraud. Then, nearly a decade later, mass demonstrations resulted in *The Revolution of Dignity*, often referred to as the *Euromaidan demonstrations*. These demonstrations followed the Ukrainian government's decision to suspend preparations for signing the *Ukraine–European Union Association Agreement* with the European Union, instead seeking closer economic relations with Russia. The Ukrainian people wanted nothing of this.

In early 2014, Russia invaded the Crimean Peninsula, part of Ukraine, and then annexed it. In February 2022 Russia initiated a full-on invasion of Ukraine, which has been valiantly defending itself since. And the reason we are sending postcards to the front.

Christmas cards from a German friend

By Helen



Figure 3: Photo by Vivian.

How wonderful to receive a package of Christmas cards for Defenders from Vivian, a German [Postcrossing](#) friend!

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Vivian has been "looking for ways to help and show Ukrainians support." She was surprised to find a notice on Postcrossing about *Postcards to the Front*.

"As a postcard lover myself, I know that a special message can make your day," so she "absolutely loves the idea of encouragement through postcards."

Over a million Ukrainians have sought shelter in Germany – compared with Canada's intake of less than 200,000 – and Vivian is "really proud that my country is helping"

She is also intrigued at hearing the Ukrainian language spoken on German streets and recently read that the Ukrainians "want to speak their own language and cherish their own cultural heritage. That's why I wanted to write something in Ukrainian," she explained about her cards.

Vivian chose to include in her message one simple sentence in Ukrainian, wishing *Happy Holidays*. Her hope is that Defenders will see the effort to write in Ukrainian as an indication "that we care about them and their culture." A good point, as Ukrainians have been fighting to preserve their culture for generations.

As others, Vivian is keenly aware that Defenders have been away from family and friends for a long time, and that the situation "must be very sad and dangerous."

Rather than feel helpless, Vivian said, "if you are like me and can't fight in this war yourself, I think that writing a postcard is the least thing you can do. [T]he Defenders," Vivian emphasizes, "are fighting for democracy, so they are not only fighting to protect their own country; they are protecting everyone who is living in the free world!"



Figure 4: Photo by Vivian

And, she believes that “everybody can write a postcard; it’s a very easy thing to do. It’s so important to show the Defenders that they are not alone, that we think about them and show them our support!”

So, while we can’t all do big things to support Ukraine, we can remind our politicians that we do support Ukraine. And, we can also write a handful of postcards.

Vivian “hopes the Defenders will be happy about all the loving and warm messages they will receive. I imagine them telling their families that so many people in the world support them. That Ukraine is not alone. We are here!”

NOTE: Please do not send any more Christmas / New Year’s greetings. We are past the cut-off time for getting them into care packages for the holidays. 💙💛

Celebrating Ukrainian Culture

Ukraine celebrates the arts community on November 9th, with *Cultural Workers and Folk Artists Day*, a national day of observance. Therefore, we’d like to introduce you to [UART](#),

UART

an international platform whereby Ukrainian artists can share their creations with the world, as well as unite with one another in a shared sense of cultural identity.



Figure 5: Warmth of Woman's Hands series by Olga Haydamaka.

One way for postcard warriors to support Ukraine is to seek out Ukrainian businesses and artists from whom we can purchase postcards.

For instance, one artist featured at UART is [Olga Haydamaka](#). She also has her own website [here](#). We have enjoyed sending her poignant postcards from her series, “Warmth of Woman’s Hands”, available at [Postal Ukraine](#).

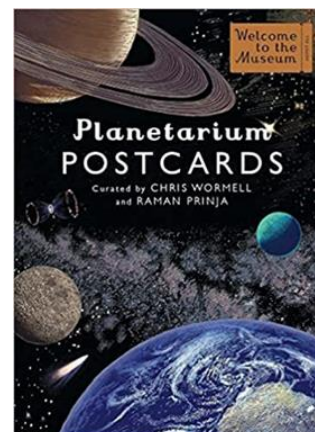
Stay tuned to our monthly newsletter for future features about Ukrainian artists.

Australia Branch News and Updates

By Australia Branch

> 5,000 Cards Reached

SC Chua from Singapore was the lucky winner of our 5,000th card. Her prize has been delivered and she is very happy to have these unusual prizes.



> Christmas at the Front

We have sent 1,767 Christmas cards to Ukraine.

Our initial aim was to have a contingency of 1,000 cards in case the war went beyond Christmas. Your response to this project has been awesome.

> School Engagement Success

Sue & Colin W from Berwick have achieved a first for our group. They have managed to engage a local school, not an easy thing to do. They had to go through lots of paperwork which took lots of time, including a Police Check.

Their determination reaped rich rewards. 227 Christmas cards sent to Ukraine.

Anyone thinking of engaging a school to participate needs to understand this is a complicated and time consuming activity, but it can be done!

> World Postcard Day 01 October 2023

Our World Postcard Day effort was misplaced unfortunately not a success. Anne and Peter reached their goal of 10 cards each as per our goal. On the positive side 20 extra cards never go astray.

> Need Some Postcards?

Tamara has kindly provided us with some new postcards.

Send [Peter](#) an email with your address and we will post 5 cards out to you.



> Our thanks to Corrine for our new sign



> Postal Hugs Campaign

We have launched a **Postal Hug campaign** through the month of November that anyone can enter. Every envelope, with three or more cards written to Defenders, received in our mailbox through the month of November, qualifies the sender for a [written] postal hug from Tamara. Write some cards! You *know* you want a hug! Tamara's waiting to send you one!



> President's Website

Did you know President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has an [official website](#) in English? You can subscribe to it and get information emailed to you.

November 11 – A Day of Remembrance

By Helen and Peter

As member nations of the Commonwealth, both Australia and Canada remember those who served and died in all wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations, as well as honour the contributions and suffering of all those who have served, on Remembrance Day (Canada) / ANZAC Day (Australia and New Zealand Army Corps Day). A tradition begun in 1919, after WWI.



Figure 6: The 2021 stamp that celebrates the remembrance poppy's 100th anniversary as a symbol of remembrance in Canada. Photo taken from [Canada Post](#).

In Australia ANZAC day is commemorated at a dawn service. The ODE (from *For the Fallen*, a poem by the English poet and writer Laurence Binyon in 1914) is solemnly spoken.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

Last year some Ukrainian troops held a ceremony on their training grounds. Amidst the shelling and shooting they faintly and formally repeated our ceremony. It brought tears to our eyes.

Postcards to the Front (Canada / Канада) is scheduled to meet with a class of Gr. 5 students to discuss how the mail system works, both civilian and military, and the meaning of *Remembrance Day*. Students will write postcards to Ukraine's Defenders as well as to veterans of Canada's armed forces.

Please take a few moments to write a couple of postcards with messages of support to Ukraine's Defenders, and send them on to your *Postcards to the Front* branch located in either Australia or Canada. We'll be sure that the Defenders get your cards. Thank you!

Canada Branch News and Updates

By Canada Branch



Figure 7: Photo by Jean-Michel.

Autumn is our favourite season, so we've been enjoying fabulously sunny warm days, and our countryside landscape is richly dressed in a palate of yellows, oranges, reds and greens. Gorgeous trees!

Our Christmas campaign has ended. As the cards take some time to travel to the front lines, no more are able to reach Defenders in time for the holidays. Thank you all who sent cards with messages of support, care and good cheer for the holidays – so many pretty Christmas greetings! – including from our American and German friends.

If you are a forward planner, maybe consider writing a batch of cards expressing affection and care to Defenders, so we can get them to the front lines for February. You know ... *Valentine's Day*. 💙💛



We have launched a **Postal Hug campaign** through the month of November that anyone can enter. Every envelope, with three or more written cards, received in our mailbox through the month of November, qualifies the sender for a [written] postal hug from Tamara. Details on our [website](#). C'mon. Write some cards! You *know* you wanna a hug! Tamara's waiting to send you one!



Linda, who designed and manages our newsletter layout, is hosting several lotteries for Postcrossers:

1. A [\[Special Lottery\]: Five \(5\) written cards for Defenders for One \(1\) rare Ghibli pop-up card](#). This lottery closes November 15, 2023.
2. For the person who sends the largest number of written cards for Ukraine's Defenders – that land in our mailbox BY January 15, 2024 – the prize is a box set of 100 Ghibli Movie postcards. [This offer](#) closes January 15, 2024.



Figure 8: Ghibli Museum pop-up cards purchased in 2022 and Ghibli movie postcard box set published by Chronicle Books in 2019.

Remember, you have to be logged in to Postcrossing to access the lottery details.

HEADS UP! If you are a Ghibli card fan, Linda plans to host a 3:1 Postcrossing lottery to be held between **15 November and 15 December**. You send three or more cards to be entered to win cards purchased directly at the Ghibli museum. Can't be bought anywhere else. So, stay tuned at [Postcrossing](#).

Check out these offers if you are a Postcrosser! Also, check out our feature article in this issue about Linda, our newest team member.



Figure 9: Monarch photo by Diane Burelle, WI member.

On October 16, we were guest speakers at the *Women's Institute Zooming Monarchs* in Manitoba. Such an enthusiastic group of caring, active women! *Women's Institutes* have been making a difference in their communities across Canada for over 100 years. Their objectives are to:

- Empower women
- Promote meaningful change
- Connect with others in an extended community
- Have fun and gain knowledge
- Work on worldwide issues

It was an honour to tell them about *Postcards to the Front*: origins of the initiative, evolution, objectives, and how Canadians can support Ukraine.

We always enjoy hearing the personal connections that Canadians make to Ukraine, whether familial or through memory. Several *Monarchs* shared childhood memories of letter-writing with far-away relatives, especially grandparents; therefore, making strong emotional connections to the positive and uplifting feelings that postcards would give to Defenders.

Thank you *Monarchs* for inviting us to share about *Postcards to the Front*, as well as for spreading the word about the need for messages of support to Defenders of Ukraine.

We look forward to receiving cards from beautiful Manitoba, which is home to many early Ukrainian settlers in Canada!



You may recall the generous welcome and fun card-writing workshops that we held with citizens of Merrickville, Ontario last month. Well, the *Lions Club* of Merrickville sent us \$100.00 worth of postage stamps to help cover costs of mailings to Ukraine. Many thanks!

And a BIG shout-out to Marcus – US Army veteran from Arizona, USA, and Postcrossing friend – for his postage support, as well as his commitment to write several cards each week to Defenders. Our first veteran to join this project! Thank you, Marcus!

Need some cards to write to Defenders? We can send you an envelope with five blank *Canada supports Ukraine* cards for you to write back. Free! Design by Ukrainian artist, Viktoriia Shepel (IG: @vectra_pictures). Just [email us](#) your request.



And, please ... share our website as widely as you can – postcardstothefrontcanada.com. Ask family and friends to write cards. Involve your kids.



Recapping our gratitudes:

- Thank you to *Merrickville Lions* and Arizona Marcus for your postage support.
- We are grateful for every single card that comes to our mailbox. Thank you postcard warriors in Canada, Germany, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France.
- We are grateful for all of those who have spread the word about *Postcards to the Front* to others ... these connections help our efforts to support Ukraine.
- November 11 is **Remembrance Day** in Canada. We are thankful for our freedom, our comforts, our families, and our friendships. All that Ukraine is presently fighting for. After your 11th-hour reflection on November 11th about those who have served Canada with their lives, consider sending a few cards to Ukraine's Defenders. As well, you may want to send cards to Canadian Armed Forces personnel. You can find out how from the Department of National Defence Canada website, [here](#).



Your cards **do** *make a difference* ...

Here's what Danylo, at the front lines in Ukraine, has to say about your messages –



Nothing warms the soldiers' heart as a handwritten letter.



– Defender Danylo

Questions? Do you have unused stamps to pass along to our team (we could use some!)? Or blank cards? Be in touch by [email](#). And if you have a batch of written cards ready for us to send on to Ukraine, please see the contact section for our address.

Thank you for your continued support of Defenders in Ukraine!

Stamp Out War: Support Ukraine!

Interview with Linda, *Postcards to the Front* newsletter layout designer

By Helen

She collects stamps. She is a lifelong peace lover. She cycles all over the world. And she is an artist.

The invasion of Ukraine by Russia in 2022 was like *a call to action* for Linda, bringing together all of these interests in unexpected ways. Including their alignment with her upbringing.

“I grew up to embrace peace as my highest value,” Linda told us. “In my native country, Taiwan, the fear of an impending war was always lurking ... and it used to be said by my elders that the third world war would begin the moment China attacks Taiwan.”

Linda sees similarities between China/Taiwan and Russia/Ukraine, where self-ruling democracies are threatened by authoritarian regimes, with “the people ... trying very hard to find their own cultural identity that distinguishes themselves from [the threat of another power].”

How did Linda get from there to here? From the moment of awareness that Ukraine had been invaded, to volunteering her time and skills to *Postcards to the Front*?

It’s a meander journey.

Linda isn’t one to just sit back and wring her hands with worry. She had to do something, so initiated the [Stamp Out War: Support Ukraine!](#) project shortly after the invasion. This project stemmed from the publication on the Internet of her photograph of a yellow canola field with a cloudless blue sky in the backdrop.



Figure 10: Linda's photograph War and Peace taken in PEI, Canada, 2009, post-processed and published in 2022.

Taken during a bike tour across Canada in 2009, Linda didn't do anything with the image until a few days after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. She posted the image on the Internet, and while reflecting "how a moment of tranquility contrasts times of trouble with the madness of war", Linda saw more potential in the image.

She then decided to print some postcards of the canola field image, handing them out to people to educate them about Ukraine. But her strong urge to do something productive to more specifically help the people of Ukraine led to her exploring ways to raise funds for Ukraine.

The first step was deciding to create a maxicard [known as *maximum cards*, they are postcards that feature an image along with a stamp of a very similar or related image on the picture side of the card] using her *War and Peace* image.

Then, Linda learned that Croatia had issued a special stamp to show its support of Ukraine. It featured a rapeseed field with a blue sky backdrop, and she instantly saw the similarities to her image. "It turns out," she recalls, "that this new Croatian issue was part of the worldwide response by the official postal agency of 11 countries to Europe's largest refugee crisis since World War II."



Figure 11: Countries which had issued Ukraine support stamps before mid-2022.

By April, 2022, Linda had launched two distinct projects. The first focuses on supporting Ukraine using the Ukraine support stamps in the blue/yellow colour scheme. The other is her response to the more abstract theme of *peace* for which she uses other peace-themed postcards and stamps.

Linda issued a global call, through many channels including social media and [Postcrossing](#), asking people from the 11 countries to show solidarity with Ukraine on Ukraine's national day – August 24th – by getting a postmark on the nation's Ukraine support stamp, affixed to her *War and Peace* card.

There are now 15 countries with Ukraine support stamps:



Figure 12: 15 worldwide stamp programs recognised by UkrPoshta that support Ukraine since Russia's invasion include 2 personalised issues (Czech Republic and Luxembourg). Canada's stamp is on the bottom left.

Linda was overwhelmed when so many people all over the world volunteered to participate in the project, even though some did not have a Ukraine support stamp issued, so she decided to enlarge the scope of her project by acquiring what she calls 'Ukraine tribute

stamps'. These stamps feature sunflowers or other yellow flowers where sunflowers are not an indigenous plant. Here are some examples:



Figure 13: Ukraine Support Maxicards realised in Denmark, Spain, and Ukraine on August 24th, 2022.

People from 25 countries participated in Linda's project in 2022, and this year, some 30 countries joined the project.

Linda's projects are but a few examples of the ways in which people all over the world come together to articulate their support for a nation that so many view as being terrorized and bullied, while concurrently expressing a desire for peace.

So far, Linda's maxicards have generated a total of \$2,748 through past auction on eBay and the [ongoing weekly auctions](#), with the highest price realized being \$150/ card. Another \$400 was received in donations. Proceeds go to the [Canada-Ukraine Foundation](#).

Linda continues to expand her concepts and activities to support Ukraine through her art and philately, as well as enlargement of her peace-related concepts.



Figure 14: Peace maxicards realised on World Peace Day in Peace River, AB, and Notre-Dame-de-la-Paix, QC, Canada.

For example, there is her *World Peace Day* (September 21st each year) maxicard creation and project, which aims to originate peace-themed maxicards at peace-related locations, such as Peace River in Alberta, Canada. A massive undertaking, but Linda is determined to raise awareness about the human aspiration for peace. Again, Linda relies on the generosity and support of others around the world to help her achieve her goals by finding and affixing stamps to create maxicards, and then having them canceled at a local post office.

Along the way, Linda has found ways to translate information from various postal agencies, as well as has

learned all sorts of postal history, and about challenges with postal services all over the planet. There are a lot!

In her youth, Linda was introduced to a quote that was life-changing. “It’s a moral principle,” she shared, “often called the ‘Formula of Humanity’, formulated by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant”:

So act that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means.

In other words, Linda explains, “it is morally wrong to treat another person merely as an instrument or tool that serves a certain purpose,” we must also “acknowledge her/his intrinsic values and to care for her/his well-being.”

For Linda, all war is oppositional. “It’s utterly unacceptable ... that soldiers and civilians get killed for political gain.”

And while you read this, “if you’ve been thinking or talking [about an idea], but never dare make the first step to initiate a project, ... start by doing something little to show your determination. Like putting a sign on your bike or hanging a flag by your window. Once people see your commitment, help will come in.”

Photography. Philately. Philosophy.

And a newsletter needing aesthetics.

Welcome to *Postcards to the Front* Linda. We’re glad you care and that you reached out to offer your time and talents to our international team!



Figure 15: Linda and her friend's bikes with support Ukraine sign while they were touring in Taiwan in early 2023.