



# Postcards to the Front

## International Newsletter

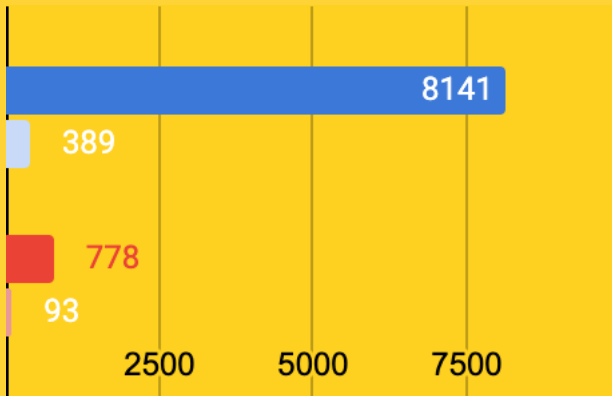
December 2023

Ukraine  
Australia  
Canada



Volume 1, Issue 5

### A Month in Postcards



This month our postcard warriors from Australia sent 389 cards and from Canada sent 93 cards. Australia’s total (including the Christmas cards) sent is now 8141 cards and Canada’s total sent is now 778.

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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Helen and Jean-Michel



**Postcards to the Front (Canada/ Канада)**

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# A Holiday Season Recap

By Marichka and Linda



Figure 1: Marichka with the Christmas cards destined for Ukraine's Defenders.

In the spirit of solidarity, a staggering 3,280 postcards found their way to Ukraine for Christmas and New Year, bridging distances with empathy and understanding. Marichka's calculations, while reflecting a numerical count, couldn't capture the depth of the emotional resonance these postcards brought to the Defenders. The outpouring of support from diverse corners of the globe – from Australia to Canada, Germany, the USA, and beyond – painted a vivid picture of a world united in its appreciation for the sacrifices made by these brave individuals.

Each postcard became a vessel of hope, carrying with it the collective goodwill of those who took a moment to pause and extend their thoughts to those on the frontline. The

As the holiday season unfolds, supporters of *Postcards to the Front* rallied together to send messages of love, encouragement, and support to Ukraine's frontline Defenders, providing a sense of warmth, pride, and motivation during challenging times. In this article, Marichka at the Ukraine branch shared a touching narrative of the impact of our collective effort, shedding light on the profound effect it had on those receiving the postcards.

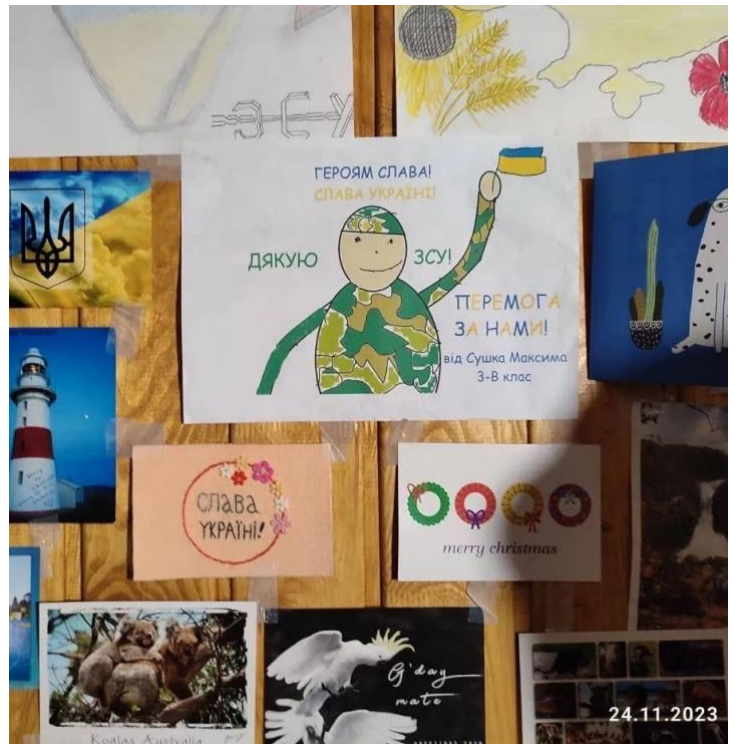


Figure 2: A fraction of the staggering 3280 postcards from you to Ukraine.

Defenders, separated from the warmth of home, family, and the normalcy of life, found solace in these handwritten notes.

As we delve into the narratives of those who received these postcards, a common theme emerges – the profound impact on morale and the emotional fortitude it provides. From one Defender’s perspective, “I find it very pleasant to read these postcards, as do my comrades. It’s a delightful reminder that someone cares about us, apart from ourselves. In these postcards, we find at least moral support. It is very pleasant.”

In the words of one Defender, “I feel pride for the rear and happiness because people care, help, and you try to accelerate our victory even more. There is a spark igniting in the soul. There is motivation to work, perform tasks, and a strong sense of support is felt. It is very difficult to convey the full spectrum of emotions!”



Figure 3: Happy Defender with your heartwarming card in the snow.



Figure 4: A Defender hinged the card he received in his vehicle.

One Defender, candidly admitting a language barrier, highlighted the universal language of compassion embedded in these postcards: “From the text, we understand that people from safe cities and countries know and understand that it’s not cheerful here. When you receive a postcard, you understand that people 100, 1000, 1 2000 km away can stop for a moment and think, ‘How are the Ukrainian Defenders doing now? It’s winter there, cold.’”

The Defenders, facing the harshness of winter, keep these postcards close – tucked into backpacks, within the confines of their vehicles. The words inscribed on each piece of paper, a testament to the shared humanity that binds us all.



Another Defender shared, “The cards are making us feel supported. It makes us forget about loneliness. Thank you for your support. May the force be with you.” These messages, translated with the help of friends, became a lifeline connecting the Defenders to a world that acknowledged and empathised with their reality.

In the spirit of unwavering support, we extend our deepest gratitude to all who participated, for in each postcard sent, there lies a beacon of hope and a promise of solidarity. Together, let us continue to demonstrate compassion that transcends borders and speaks to the resilience of the human spirit.

If you haven’t participated yet, there’s still time to make a positive impact on the lives of those who sacrifice so much for the well-being of others.

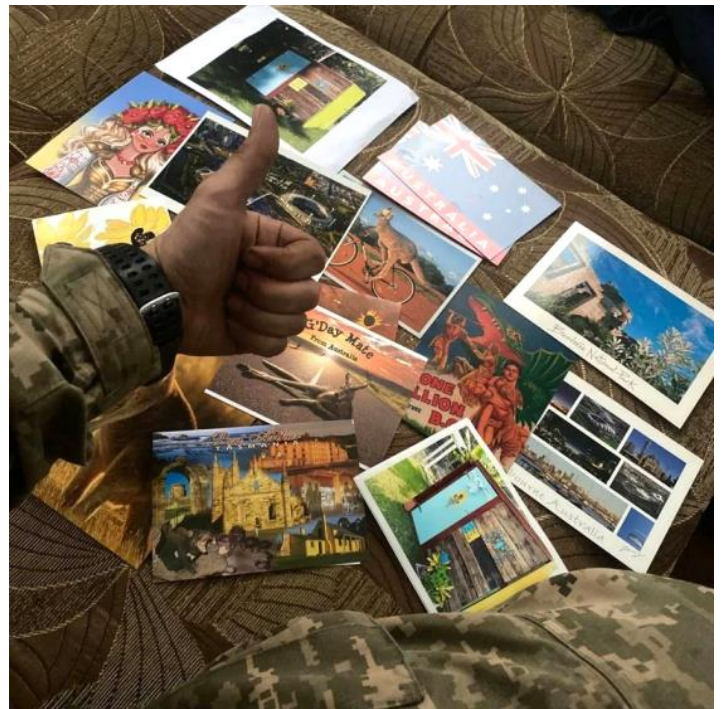
Thank you for being unbelievably awesome!



Figure 5: Happy Defenders receiving their care packages with the cards you wrote them.

# Cards Arrive at the Front Lines

Your messages of support bring joy to Ukraine's Defenders.







***No Defender is forgotten!***

# Let's learn some Ukrainian ...

By Tamara

There are 2 years of war already    Війна йде вже два роки

We know Ukraine needs weapons    Ми знаємо, Україні потрібна зброя

Brothers and neighbors are different terms    Брати і сусіди - це різні речі

Stay till the end! (the end of the war)    Стійте до кінця

Don't give up!    Не здавайтеся!

We send you our continuous support    Ми підтримуємо вас увесь цей час



## *Greetings from the hot and sunny Caribbean*

Dear Defenders, as we escape the cold and austere Canadian winter for Caribbean warmth and sun, we are sending you warmth and messages of support, because ...



*We don't forget about you –  
ми не забуваємо про вас*

— Helen and Jean-Michel on vacation



# The Politics of War

By Peter

I often receive articles from different team members. Recent articles especially address issues that I am worried about. [One is by Fiona Hill](#) who is a keen observer not just of Russia and its leader, but also of American politics, having served in the White House as a top adviser to both Democrats and Republicans.

Fiona discusses how domestic politics may lead to the USA reducing aid to Ukraine and the consequences of this.

Being mainly a bunch of Aussies and Canadians there is nothing we can do to influence this. Still, I am going to contact my Federal Member and ask for a commitment from our government that we continue to support Ukraine, regardless of what the Americans do.

The war in Ukraine is quite simple in terms of right and wrong. Russia has invaded its neighbour which it recognized as an independent country in 1991.

*The Act of Declaration of Independence of Ukraine* was adopted by the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR on 24 August 1991. *The Act* re-established Ukraine's state independence. The Declaration was affirmed by a majority of Ukrainians in all regions of Ukraine by an independence referendum on 1 December, followed by international recognition starting on the following day. Ukrainian independence led to the dissolution of the Soviet Union by 26 December 1991.

Recognition of Ukraine's independence by Russia was announced on the 2nd of December by President Boris Yeltsin. It was recognised as such by Canada on the same day by Canada and on the 26th of December 1991 by Australia.

There is no question. Russia invaded an independent state.

# Correspondence between Peter and Mr. Tim Watts (MP), Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia

By Peter and Aidan Chu

**From:** Peter Ramadge  
**Sent:** Friday, December 15, 2023 8:18 PM  
**To:** Watts, Tim (MP)  
**Subject:** Australian support for Ukraine

Tim

As my local representative and Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs I am sure that you are aware of the activity of Republican representatives in the USA threatening to reduce or stop contributions to the defence of Ukraine.

There is an excellent article about it by Fiona Hill about it in Politico

<https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2023/12/12/fiona-hill-ukraine-putin-00131285>

We have 600 odd people who send Postcards of support to Ukraine.

Can you please reassure our group that Australia will continue to support Ukraine in the war against Russia regardless of what the USA does with its support?

Yours sincerely,

Peter Ramadge

Australian Ambassador for Postcards to the Front



**From:** Chu, Aidan (T. Watts, MP)  
**Date:** Tuesday, Dec 19, 2023 at 2:03 PM  
**To:** Peter Ramadge  
**Subject:** RE: Australian support for Ukraine. [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Dear Mr Ramadge,

Thank you for taking the time to contact the Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Watts has asked me to respond to you on his behalf.

Thank you for raising this issue with us. It is a serious issue, for many it is deeply personal, and we have noted your correspondence.

Mr Watts would like to thank you for your efforts in sending letters to Ukraine, with Senator Bilyk. He was happy to help facilitate this earlier this year, and is glad to hear you have sent that many postcards.

To date, Australia has contributed \$910 million in support of Ukraine, including \$730 million in military assistance.

But we also recognise the need to work with international partners. Australia will continue to work with partners to support Ukraine. We are working hard to convey to our international partners – publicly and privately – that a collective response against Russia’s invasion is in everyone’s best interests.

Since January, Australian soldiers have helped to train more than 1,200 recruits as part of the UK-led and based multinational training mission to support Ukraine’s national defence following Russia’s illegal and immoral invasion.

Furthermore, The Australian Government, with the support of local defence industry, is providing a further \$20 million package of military assistance to Ukraine.

More information on our support can be found below:

<https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/media-releases/2023-10-25/australian-capabilities-continue-supporting-ukraine>



<https://www.foreignminister.gov.au/minister/penny-wong/media-release/australia-expands-training-support-ukrainian-forces#:~:text=Australia%20has%20committed%20approximately%20%24910.Acting%20Prime%20Minister%2C%20the%20Hon.>

I hope this information is useful.

Thank you again for taking the time to write to the Assistant Minister and for your continued advocacy.

Aidan Chu

The Hon. Tim Watts MP  
Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Federal Member for Gellibrand

### ***Postcards to the Front interview with YouTuber Ana Byo (@annapostcard)***



Ukrainian YouTuber, [Ana Byo](#), reached out to *Postcards to the Front* Ambassadors in Ukraine, Australia, and Canada, to interview us about our global project to collect postcard messages of support for Ukraine's Defenders. Following the [first part](#) of the interview she released in November, she released the [Part 2](#) on December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Thank you, Ana, for sharing about the need for postcard messages of support to Ukraine!

# Australia Branch News and Updates

By Peter

## > Uncontrollable Anger

I was born in 1952. One of my earliest memories was my mother telling me that we should never forget what the Germans did to the Jews. Like most boys of this era, I ended up having a collection of Air fix model planes from WW2. A Spitfire, a Hurricane, and a Mustang. Eventually a Messerschmitt 109 joined the fleet so that my brother and I would have an enemy to shoot down.

In secondary school I read books like *Animal Farm*, *1984* and *one day in the life of Ivan Denisovich*. I lived through the cold war's year; I detested Russian leaders. I thought I knew a lot about the gulags. This year I found out what little I really knew about gulags. Initially I found out at Ukrainian House in North Melbourne about the internal deportations of Ukrainians, Estonians, Lithuanians Latvians and others.

Recently I watched You Tube documentary called [\*Gulag: The History\*](#). I realized that I had acquired only a teaspoon full of knowledge in regards to the gulags. I think it should be compulsory viewing for anyone who wants to express an opinion on the current war in Ukraine. Russia is led by a brutal dictator who identifies the breakup of the Soviet Union as the worst thing that happened in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Last Monday I had lunch with my brother and our two cousins. I walked out when one of my cousins started sprouting pro-russian propaganda such as *Ukraine has always been part of Russia* and *if you want the war to stop Ukrainians should just lay down their arms and surrender*. I just don't know how to deal with this anger I feel about this. Any suggestions would be appreciated.

## > Facebook Page

I have set up a Facebook Page for *Postcards to the Front*. I put it as a "page" linked to my normal Facebook Page. This was a mistake because it is such a difficult thing to edit/add new posts. There are 50 followers at the moment so I am loathed to change it to a group page.

I would however ask anyone who has a Facebook account to SHARE it to your friends. It is called [Postcards to the Front Australia](#).



Figure 6: Facebook page of Postcards to the Front Australia.

**> Are you running short of Postcards?**

I have heaps of Australia supports Ukraine and a lot of other ones too.

Just [email me](#) with your postal address and I will post you some.





# Canada Branch News and Updates

By Helen



**What about the holidays at the front lines?** Our Christmas campaign ran through the summer until the end of September. This was to allow time for season's greetings to travel to the front lines in time for holiday care packages.

As can be imagined, Defenders will be missing the comfort and warmth of home and the love of family and friends even more than usual. Holiday greetings from around the world will ensure that Defenders know that we haven't forgotten them.

Meanwhile, we are already looking ahead two months, when the 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary since Russia's invasion rolls along on February 24<sup>th</sup>. Then, Ukraine will be in the midst of winter's deep freeze. Battlefield conditions will be inhospitable and uncomfortable.

We can shed some light, and add a bit of warmth to a Defender's day by sending *lots* of love, care and moral support. Through our messages on postcards.

Please, spare a few moments over the holiday season to write a few cards for Defenders. Your messages of support will mean a lot to them.



**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 your request to: [postcardstothefront.canada@gmail.com](mailto:postcardstothefront.canada@gmail.com)

And, please ... share our website as widely as you can – [postcardstothefrontcanada.com](http://postcardstothefrontcanada.com). 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](#).



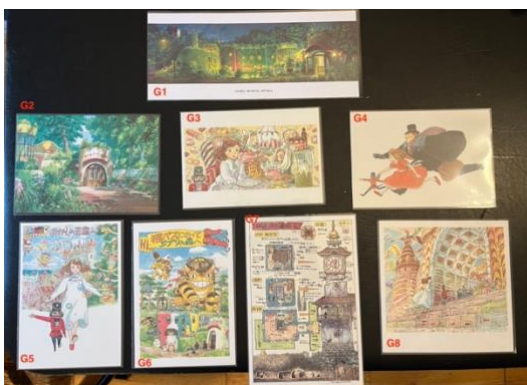
Our November **Postal Hug campaign** has ended and the five winners will soon find a postal hug in their mailbox – written by Tamara and sent from Ukraine. Congratulations to Valerie from British Columbia, Lynda from Ontario, Brigitte and Linda, both from Quebec, and Aloy & Edu from Costa Rica. Thank you all for sending your messages of support to Ukraine’s Defenders.



Linda, who designed and manages our newsletter layout, is hosting several **lotteries for Postcrossing members**. Don’t forget to write your Postcrossing ID on the back of the envelope.

1. For the person who sends the largest number of written cards for Ukraine’s Defenders – that land in our mailbox by January 31, 2024 – the prize is a box set of 100 Ghibli Movie postcards. [This offer](#) closes January 31, 2024. *Don’t delay getting your cards in the mail!*
2. 3:1 Postcrossing lottery. You send three or more cards in an envelope to our Millbrook, Ontario post box, and each one will be entered to win cards purchased directly at the Ghibli museum. These cards can’t be bought anywhere else. So, Postcrossers, check out the lottery details and guidelines in [Postcrossing](#). This lottery will close January 31, 2024. *Be sure to get your cards in the mail ASAP!*

**Remember**, you have to be a member of Postcrossing to access these particular lottery details.





## Upcoming Events

### > Oshawa Museum, Sunday, January 21, 1-3pm

Many Canadians feel a need to do something that is personal and meaningful to support Ukraine. This is why we go out into the community to share about *Postcards to the Front* and to facilitate postcard-writing workshops.

We're excited to be invited to [Oshawa Museum](#) where area residents can learn about this important global project and write messages of support and encouragement to Defenders of Ukraine.

Workshop participants will:

- ✓ learn about the project and impacts of postcards at the front lines
- ✓ be introduced to the Ukrainian alphabet, and practice writing some meaningful phrases in Ukrainian for use in writing messages of support
- ✓ write postcards to Defenders.

Registration is Free. All ages welcome.

We provide postcards, writing and drawing tools, samples, and paper crafting supplies.

### > 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 cover the cost of 15 packages of postcards to Ukraine. Thank you!



Recapping our gratitudes:

- Thank you to Lynda for stamps to sponsor postcards to Ukraine.



- Thank you to the Toronto Postcard Club for a generous donation of stamps to sponsor 15 packages of postcards to Ukraine!
- 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 heard about *Postcards to the Front* from a friend in Tasmania!



**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? Be in touch: [postcardstothefront.Canada@gmail.com](mailto:postcardstothefront.Canada@gmail.com)

And if you have a batch of written cards ready for us to send on to Ukraine, here's our address:

*Postcards to the Front (Canada / Канада)*  
P. O. Box 184  
Millbrook, ON L0A 1G0  
Canada

***Thank you for your continued support of Defenders of Ukraine! And Best Wishes to you for a healthy and calm 2024!***

# Why Two Kids in Costa Rica Care about Ukraine

By Helen

Aloy and Edu are two young brothers from Costa Rica who reached out to ask if we could help them get postcards to Ukraine's front line Defenders.

Sending mail around the planet is not easy for them. Costa Rica has suspended mail service to many countries. Including Ukraine.



Figure 7: Postcards Aloy and Edu wrote to Ukraine's Defenders.

Their interest in postcards started accidentally a few years ago when Aloy's grandfather helped him research about kangaroos on the Internet. They discovered some information about sending postcards, and his grandfather suggested, "perhaps someday someone will send a kangaroo card, and guess what ... Now we have more than 300 kangaroo cards, many souvenirs, a t-shirt."

They try their best at school and like to watch old TV shows, such as "Lost in Space" and "Skippy the Bush Kangaroo" (a box DVD set was sent to them by a pen friend in Australia). And, they are [Postcrossers](#). They love to send and collect postcards.

Edu, the younger, likes science, but is not confident with languages. Postcarding gives him a chance to practice writing in English. He has pen friends in India and Romania, and is interested in learning both languages.

It's not easy for these two lads to get stamps or postcards. Sometimes, they have to wait until their family makes a trip to the capital, San José. But they persist! And persuade.

Recently, when buying postcards to send to Ukraine's Defenders, the guy at the shop actually just *gave* the cards to them. *No charge ... for a good cause!*

Since joining Postcrossing more than five years ago, postcards have given Aloy and Edu the opportunity "to learn about all the countries of the world ... to read about rare animals, traditions, food, people's hobbies." As they are introduced to new ideas and places, Aloy has expanded his interests to learn about UNESCO sites that he calls "wonderful treasures in the world. Only four UNESCO sites ... [in Costa Rica]."

When asked why they decided to write postcards to Ukraine's front line Defenders, Aloy and Edu agree that they want to join the many others around the world who want to help Ukraine.

"It makes us believe there is faith in mankind. A war in our time, no way. We like to send mail to all good projects."

In other words, they are concerned about the war, and want to do something "good". Like write messages of support to Ukraine's Defenders.

Aloy emphasized that when they first saw the news of Russia's invasion, "it was HARD to believe ... and our country is very small, our Government can't help Ukraine. We only have



faith for the end of any war. We don't understand why a country with many resources want[s] to invade another country. Watching guns: all are terrible, awful.”

Edu adds, “War is very ugly. I can’t imagine how kids must stay in bunkers or closed places to study or to play. I pray that they can play outside with all the family. They need education.”



Figure 8: Image side of the postcards sent by Aloy and Edu to Ukraine features colourful Costa Rican landscape.

It’s a delight to receive a batch of postcards from Aloy and Edu. They feature colourful and beautiful tropical flora, fauna and Costa Rica landscapes. Some read as a love letter to nature. All express gratitude for Defenders doing “a great job”. They are also decorated with fun child-centred colourful stickers. The boys also like humour, so employ it. They feel that Ukraine’s Defenders “don’t want to read about war, [so] we write some funny things that happened to us. We write just positive things.”

They imagine a Defender receiving a card from them, and thinking, “*I would like to visit Costa Rica some day*”. And they hope that “their families will be happy to know that our world is worried about people in the front. In our country there is no army, so just thinking about the word WAR is like saying a bad word.”

When we began to encourage our postcard warriors to write some phrases in Ukrainian, Aloy and Edu took up the challenge instantly, and with a practical attitude. “We just write small sentences.”

Both Edu and Aloy like to learn phrases in different languages in order to help tourists who visit Costa Rica. Now, they hope to one day meet Ukrainian tourists that they can speak with.

After watching a Polish language movie recently, they decided they liked the language, and that “we need to watch a Ukrainian movie or documentary film to listen,” to how the language should sound. Not just to see it on paper.

Aloy writes that his greatest wish right now is for peace on this earth, and “no more viruses”. Both boys lost a lot of time from school through the pandemic, which is an unpleasant setback for them. Still, they are fluent in reading, writing and responding to our questions – in English!

Since reaching out to us a few months ago, Aloy and Edu have sent nearly 100 cards to Ukraine’s front line Defenders.

And if you need any more reason to write messages of support to Ukraine’s Defenders, young Aloy and Edu remind us:

“

*[M]ost of us are at home, safe, happy, with no worries ... about war. Sending a lovely message to someone who is doing dangerous work is to admire. We respect them so much.*

— Aloy and Edu from Costa Rica