



Postcards to the Front

International Newsletter

February 2024

Ukraine

Australia

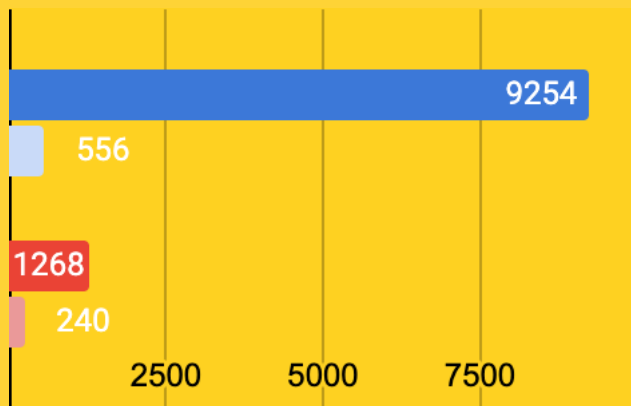
Canada

United Kingdom



Volume 1
Issue 7

A Month in Postcards



This month our postcard warriors from Australia sent 556 cards, and from Canada sent 240 cards. Australia’s total sent is now 9,254 cards, and Canada’s total sent is now 1,268.

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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What postcards mean ...

By Helen

Like many Canadians, Jean-Michel and I were appalled by the full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Immediately, we found ways to send financial support. We then reached out to people we knew in Ukraine to offer support. And, as a member of [Postcrossing](#), I revisited connections I had made with Ukrainian Postcrossers by sending postcard messages of support to them.

Over the past two years, I have been sending monthly messages of support to 40 Ukrainian friends and Postcrossing friends. I have not included my return address because I didn't want people to feel that they needed to write back. They had enough to do to survive. I just wanted them to know that someone 'out there' cared.

This was a visceral response to my need to do something personal and meaningful when faced with something senseless and horrific.

By the time the first anniversary since the invasion screamed from my calendar, I had to do more. That's when Jean-Michel and I reached out to Tamara in Zaporizhzhia to ask if we could establish a Canada branch of Postcards to the Front.

Here we are, another year later, and the journey to victory grinds on. Lives are disrupted. Lives are lost. Cities have been razed.

And ... life goes on. Under a reign of mighty terror.

With determination and resilience, Ukrainians are standing their ground. And, they need our support.

Some of the correspondents have reached out to me with notes of thanks for my support, either digitally, or by sending their own postcards. Naturally, friendships have developed.

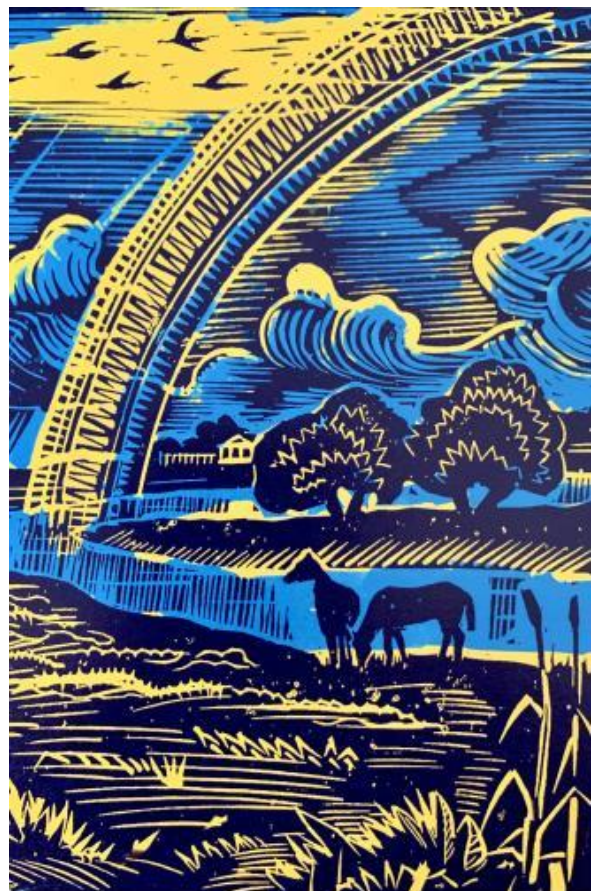


Figure 1: "Dear Ukraine" postcard sent to Helen's monthly correspondents for February 24th anniversary. Designed by katemargoli at redbubble.com.

Just days before publication of this issue of the *Postcards to the Front* newsletter, I received the following messages from one such new friend in Ukraine. She, like me, is the mother of sons. Sons that she has ‘given’ to the front lines.

Liudmyla has allowed me to share these words with you. What she feels and sees around her as she marks the 2nd anniversary since the invasion by joining a ‘charity tour’: to see the front lines for herself. And this was no February anniversary picnic in a park!

No, Liudmyla was determined to know the full extent of what her people – her sons – are living through. Brave and unafraid to face the horror. A witness to the crime that many are calling a genocide.

And when she uses the word ‘you’, I take it to mean “all of us” who support Ukraine.

That’s you, too. Thank you!



Hello dear Helen! 😊

Thank you very much for your great support of Ukraine! I read how much you do for us. How much effort and energy you put into meetings and coverage of events. On the Internet, in the news, we see that Canada and other countries go to rallies in support of Ukraine, go to Russian diplomatic institutions [to protest]. You are incredible! You are great people! ❤️

I tell my sons, relatives and work colleagues about you. People are very happy and grateful for the support. Sometimes we feel strong and stable, but sometimes from nervous tension we fall into disappointment. We are afraid that Russia is still stronger and larger in the number of its madmen who go under bullets on orders.

Then we remember our grandparents, who survived the Second World War, and again begin to believe that we will endure and live on.

On February 24, 2024, it was two years since Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and I went on a charity tour to the Kyiv region, namely to the places where the attackers - Bucha, Vorzel, and Makariv - penetrated.

We saw there a lot of scrap metal from gas stations, a destroyed shopping center that burned down from explosions, many houses are still standing destroyed and not restored. Perhaps they have not been restored because their owners are no longer alive. It was scary to see. My heart sank, and tears flowed by themselves.

On the side of one road, we saw a lot of rusty Russian military equipment, which our soldiers stopped on the approaches to Kyiv. There are many forests and fields in which there are mines, and it is dangerous and forbidden to leave the road. There are red flags everywhere, indicating danger. Miners are working there now, we saw them from the road.

I told my eldest son about it. He was near those places at the beginning of the invasion and saw it personally. And he told me that in the south of Ukraine, in the Kherson region, where he participated in the liberation, the situation is even worse. Many settlements were destroyed. And in the Donetsk region, where he was also, in general, Armageddon, like in horror films about the apocalypse.

It cannot be expressed in words.

Even as I stood and saw the destroyed houses with my own eyes, my brain could not understand how people could do such a thing? It does not fit in the head.

Helen, at the same time I want to let you know that I received a lovely card from you today. It is like an engraving with Ukrainian landscapes. How I love my country and these my favorite landscapes. What a great card back design! Thank you very much for the joy you bring, for the great support and sincere words of the soul! 😊❤️

Warm hugs and best wishes from our family!

When I asked Liudmyla if we could publish her message, this is her response –



Dear Helen,

I thank you for your kind heart and your actions to help Ukraine! Yes, of course I agree to publish what I wrote. I want people to know and understand that war is terrible, that Russia is doing terrible things.

I live in a town that is not on the front line, but a week ago a rocket hit the fuel storage tanks near us. It all burned for three days and I personally saw it. And two days ago, a shot down rocket fell very close to my house, destroyed two houses and damaged several houses nearby. We felt the walls of our house shaking.

This is our reality.

Russia bombs the civilian population and destroys everything it can reach.

Liudmyla

Let's write some Ukrainian!

We didn't forget about you ми не забуваємо про вас

We are thankful Ми вдячні

We wish you health and happiness Ми бажаємо тобі здоров'я і щастя

Our country stays with Ukraine наша країна ЗА Україну

We are together ми разом

Please forward to Her Excellency Ms Pernille Dahler Kardel Ambassador of Denmark

By Peter

From: Peter Ramadge
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 1:43 PM
To: cbramb
Subject: Please forward to Her Excellency Ms Pernille
Dahler Kardel Ambassador of Denmark

Your Excellency

I just read that Denmark is sending its “entire artillery” to Ukraine, the Danish prime minister has said. Speaking at the Munich Security Conference, Mette Frederiksen appealed to other European nations to do more. ‘They are asking us for ammunition now. Artillery now. From the Danish side, we decided to donate our entire artillery,’ she said. It’s as Russia said it has taken full control of the eastern Ukrainian city of Avdiivka, its biggest gain since capturing Bakhmut last May, after a retreat by Ukrainian troops.

This is what I call support for Ukraine. As a representative of a Ukrainian volunteer group can I send you and the Danish Government the thanks of *Postcards to the Front Australia* members for such generous support.

Peter Ramadge

Australian Ambassador for Postcards to the Front

Australia Branch News and Updates

By Peter

> Administrative Stuff Up

In the last couple of weeks a friend of mine helped me move all the Postcards to the Front stuff into a small office at home rather than having it all on the kitchen table. Overall it went really well (thanks Gab).

However there was a big stuff-up (my fault unfortunately). I usually keep names & email addresses with Stamp donations, but somehow The name for two donations of International International Express Envelopes have become separated from this generous donation.

I have been saving them for something really special. Corrine, a Postcard warrior and an artist has hand made a Vyshyvanka for Tamara and we are using one of the envelopes to send it by express post.

The donor most likely comes from or works in Wollongong. I am hoping that the donor will contact me so I can publicly acknowledge their generous donation in next Month's Newsletter.

> Finding it hard to find cards?

Peter has just received another shipment of Cards from Tamara. On top of that we have heaps of good cards. Just send me your name and address (our database only contains names and email addresses).

I can send 10, 20 or 30 cards to you. We have Ukrainian Cards, or you can ask for a mixture of cards.

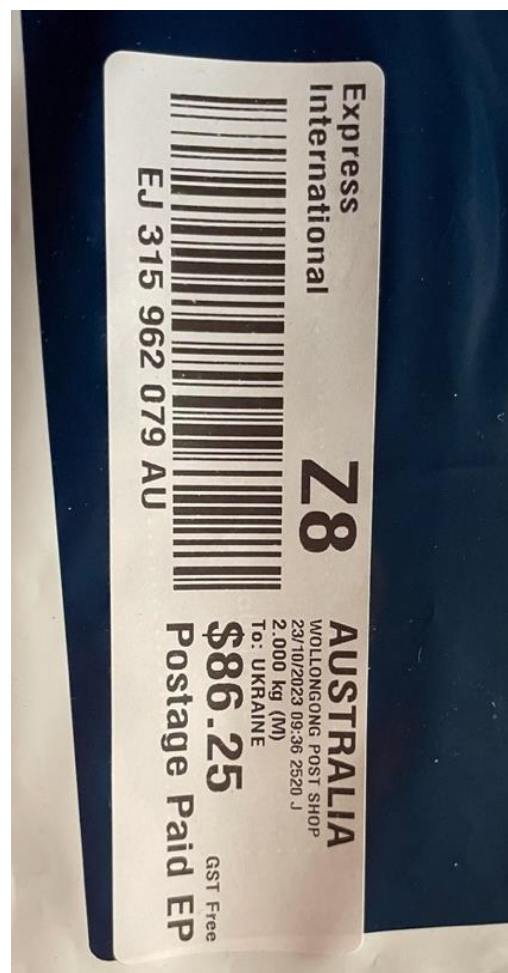


Figure 2: Tracking information on the envelope.

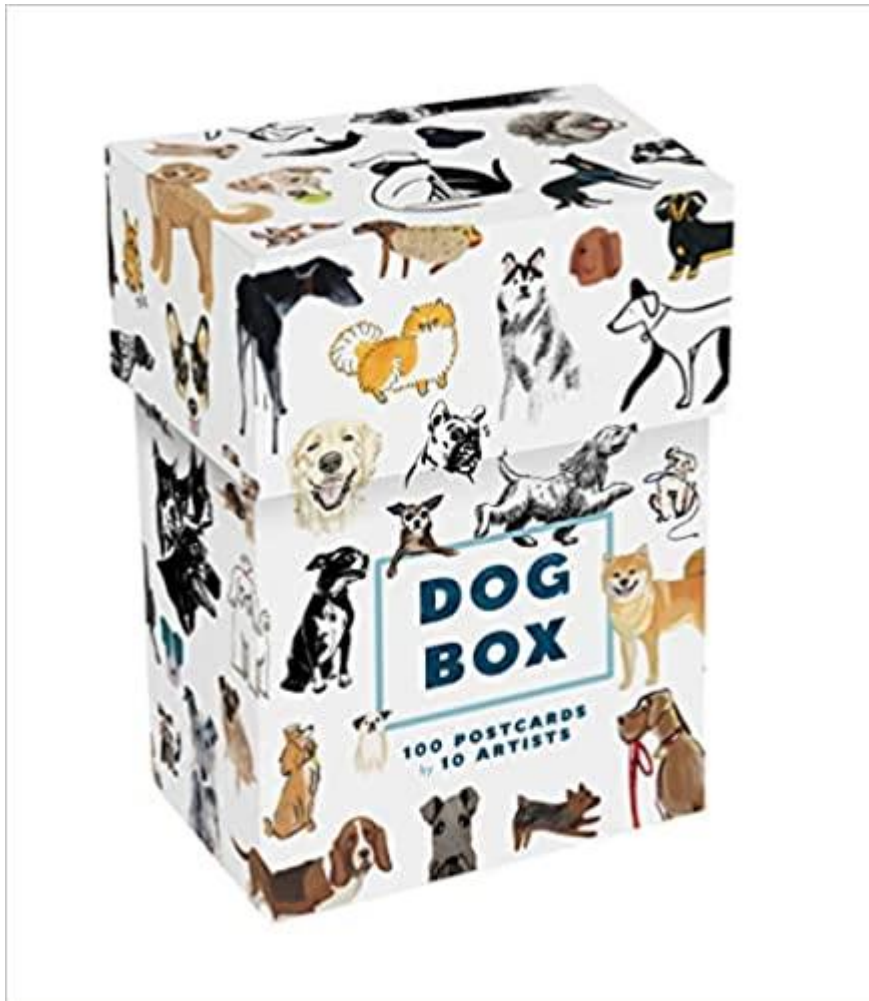


Figure 3: Cards available at the Australia Branch.

> Heading towards 10,000 Cards

As I write this (21/02/24) we creep even closer to 10,000 cards sent. We are currently at 9,139. As mentioned last month our Corporate Sponsor [Queen of the Hounds](#) has selected a box set of cards that our lucky 10,000th card sender will win. The box theme should come as no surprise to anyone. Queen of the Hounds probably asked for input from her clients.

Yes, it is:



100 Postcards of Dogs from 10 different Artists¹.

¹ Charlie is not featured on any of these cards due to a very restrictive contract he pawed with Postcards to the Front Australia.

Saskatchewan artist reflects on Ukraine in postcard design

By Connie Borsa

Although I have lived in Regina, Saskatchewan, my entire life, I remember many stories about my grandparents who immigrated to Canada from Ukraine.

They arrived in Saskatchewan in the late 1800's with a promise of 160 acres of farmland for \$10. It was winter. Wood was set on fire to warm the land enough to dig a hole to live in and survive until spring when they could clear trees, cultivate the land, and plant crops.

I believe Ukrainian people are strong, courageous and resilient to this day.

The Russia/Ukraine war has entered its third year. World focus has shifted to the war between Israel and Hamas. Defenders of Ukraine need to feel our support and to know that they are not forgotten.

Not knowing what I could do to show my support, I searched online and was pleased to find *Postcards to the Front*.



Three years ago, I had to leave my employment due to serious health issues. I started a home-based business called *Prairie Reflections Cards* to allow me an opportunity to be of service during times when my health permitted. The majority of my work is not-for-profit and a labor of love. It is my small way of being of service and making a difference.

I created a postcard that I hope is both beautiful and meaningful to the Defenders who receive it. I

chose to adorn the map of Ukraine with anemones. While white anemones are common in wooded areas of Ukraine, the purple/blue and yellow ones are rare and special. The peace dove carries kalyna berries. These berries come from the Snowball Viburnum plant which is quite common in Ukraine. This plant is often planted just outside the home because the flower is thought to bring good health and fortune to the family. These red berries have long served as a metaphor for Ukrainian nationhood and independence.

You may follow my Facebook business page, where you may purchase cards or leave me a message at www.facebook.com/Prairiereflections/

Help Wanted!

Do you want to be part of a global creative effort?

Do you have used stamps? Can you share them with us?

Antonella, a supporter of *Postcards to the Front* who lives in Croatia, has offered to create a unique postcard for us, using postage stamps.

Please ... if you have used stamps lying about, send them along for Antonella's postcard project. Any stamps are welcome. However, she has a shortage of **yellow stamps**, essential to her project, so please prioritize these.

Thank you!

You can send your gently used stamps to –

Antonella Vlase

Bencani 1
51216 Viskovo
CROATIA

Or, to –

Postcards to the Front (Canada)

P. O. Box 184
Millbrook, ON L0A 1G0
Canada

Canada Branch News and Updates

By Helen

February has been a busy time for Canada branch. We've met hundreds of Canadians who have written messages of support to Ukraine. We hear many stories that describe motivation for writing to Defenders, so far away.

There are the obvious connections to roots. Ukrainian roots. Slavic roots. Eastern European roots.

There are those who recount their own family experiences – and even personal experiences – living in a war zone. In modern times, not just as far back as World War II. Veterans. Civilians.

For instance, one woman shared about her experiences living in Ireland during the Troubles, and how it is too easy – and painful – for her to relate to the fears that everyone in Ukraine lives with daily. She knows. And she is particularly concerned about the impacts of the invasion on children and women. Now, and in the long term.

Some share their concern for the land, for pets and for wildlife, for the need to get grain to Africa.

There is a palpable fear that Ukraine is not the end of Russia's effort. What of Europe? Where is all of this going to take us in one more year, two years, five years?

There are many more 'good' reasons to support Ukraine.

The majority tell us of a pressing need to do something beyond financial support (which many already commit to). Postcard warriors want to make a personal connection. To tell Defenders – all of Ukraine – that they care, and that they see a clear injustice in Russia's invasion and war.

Yes, Canadians want to do something meaningful for Ukraine.

Which is why so many joined the global Day of Action on Saturday, February 24 to rally in support of Ukraine. Two years since the invasion. Not an anniversary any of us want to 'celebrate'.

We joined, and set up space for rally participants to write postcard messages of support to Defenders, and to sign a flag to a front line brigade.

It's imperative that we continue to show our support to Ukraine. We cannot abandon Ukraine now. Our support is needed. Weapons are most needed, of course. But a handwritten messages of support goes a long way to boost morale for the hard job of defending land and culture.

A year-end national poll found that the majority of Canadians, after nearly two years, continue to support Ukraine's defense for democracy and freedom. Good job all!

If your MP, or other political representatives, are not responding to your support for Ukraine, write to them and remind them: we have a long history as brothers and sisters. This does not end now. See below, for a sample letter.



February highlights for Canada branch

We were invited to meet with the members of St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Orthodox Church, in Oshawa, Ontario on February 11 to discuss the project to support Defenders. Church members included some Ukrainian families seeking refuge in Canada. We met the newly crowned Miss Odesa 2024. Meghan, and many other young members of the congregation, wrote heartwarming postcard messages. It is always gratifying to meet young people full of energy, enthusiasm and hope. Particularly, one such as Meghan, who is an aspiring educator just starting her university studies.



Figure 6: Meeting up with members of St. John the Baptist Church, including Miss Odesa, Meghan (second from the right).

Last autumn, we met some members of the *Toronto Postcard Club* during our two days of postcard-writing in Merrickville, Ontario, and they invited us to share about *Postcards to the Front* with the larger membership. On Sunday, February 18th, we met with the group via Zoom. What a pleasant surprise to meet individuals from across Canada and into the United States whose interest was beyond postcards. Within a week of this presentation, we received an envelope of postcards from one member, living in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. Another member joined us at the February 24th Day of Action rally in Oshawa, as well as wrote postcards and signed the flag for Defenders. We were grateful to receive a donation from this member for postage stamps. As with other groups that we meet, members offered helpful suggestions for us to reach out to other organizations in their communities, and to spread the word about this project.

In Ontario, where we live, the third Monday of February is a statutory holiday: **Family Day**. On that Monday, February 19, we met with members of St. Matthews Anglican Church in Oshawa, Ontario, who were keen to learn about this project, who wrote many postcards for Defenders, and who generously shared ideas and suggestions to meet with other groups. Many brought stamps to help fund the shipment of postcard packages. Awesome! A few days later, when I took a package to the post office for shipment, the clerk expressed surprise at the stamps which she had never seen before ... they dated some decades back. A little bit of history traveling to Ukraine!



Figure 7: Meeting at St. Matthews Anglican Church.

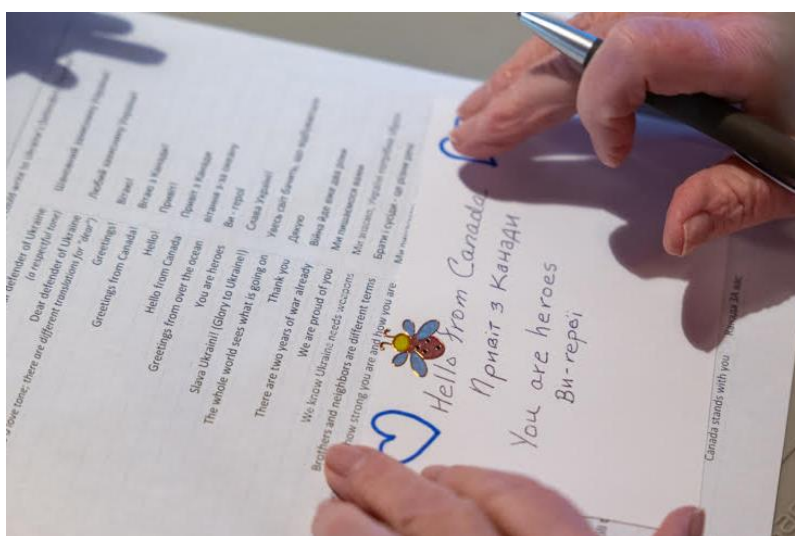


Figure 8: Writing postcards using Ukrainian phrases.

Our final event this month was an invitation from a collective of Oshawa's Ukrainian community, spanning several faith groups, educational and cultural organizations, to join them on the global **Day of Action** to support Ukraine; **Saturday, February 24**. The day began with a rally at the Albert Street bridge, over Canada's busiest Highway 401 (the Highway of Heroes). The community has been demonstrating every Sunday at this location since the full-scale invasion.



Figure 9-13: Day of Action rally at the Albert Street bridge, over Hwy 401 (the Highway of Heroes), Oshawa, Ontario.



Following the rally, there were prayers in St. George's Ukrainian Catholic Church, speeches and the sharing of information about events in Ukraine, a poignant film, all followed by refreshments, postcard-writing and flag-signing. The signed Canada/Ukraine flag is on its way to a Brigade at the front lines. It symbolizes our solidarity with our sisters and brothers in Ukraine.



Figure 13-15: Flag-signing and postcard-writing at the St. George's Ukrainian Catholic Church.

We met many individuals from the local community and beyond. Long-standing 3rd and 4th generation Ukrainians in the community, as well as recent newcomer Ukrainians sheltering in Canada. Toddlers to nonagenarians. All walks of life, including Willie Woo, Councillor with the Region of Durham. And Brandon, who did a tour in Ukraine last autumn, and who is now preparing to return for further training in the United States this summer, followed by deployment to the front lines in August. When asked what motivated him to volunteer, the young man responded plainly, "It's the right thing to do."

The Oshawa *Day of Action* group organized the production and printing of their own postcards. First, there is the image of Albert Street rally participants who have stood by Ukraine, every week since the invasion two years ago, along with a message on the back – and room for personal messages – explaining their long term actions of support. The second postcard has the text on the image side stating in Ukrainian and English:





ми не забуваємо про вас! – We didn't forget you! / Канада ЗА вас – Canada Stands with you! / Слава Україні! – Glory to Ukraine!

We always read every card sent to Ukraine. As we read through the Day of Action batch of cards, it was like reading through an epic sonnet of deep love and care. Perhaps the writers were channeling Ukrainian poets Tara Shevchenko or Lesya Ukrainka?

The glory of Ukraine,
And a clear light, not a twilight,
Will shine forth anew ...
Brothers, then, embrace each other,
I entreat and pray you!

– Tara Shevchenko, “Vyunishche”

Yes, I'll smile, indeed, through tears and weeping
Sing my songs where evil holds its sway.
Hopeless, a steadfast hope forever keeping,
I shall live! Your thoughts of grief, away!

– Lesya Ukrainka, Contra spem spero (“Against all hope, I hope”, 1890)

Дякую - Thank you - to the Dnipro Foundation, Oshawa, for their support of this project through the printing of postcards and provision of postage to sponsor packages to Ukraine. Many individuals send us blank cards for postcard-writing events, for which we are grateful. This broadens our ability to send Defenders postcards from many regions of Canada, each

one telling a story about some place in Canada. A certain delightful distraction in the trenches!

We also continue to be inspired by those who design their own cards. In past newsletters we've mentioned the work of some card-making friends who turned their craft to postcard-making. Recently, a member of Oshawa's Ukrainian community donated a number of her handcrafted postcards. The first batch has already been written and sent to Ukraine. I am excited to present her second batch to our next group of writers!

Last month, we received an inquiry from Connie in Regina, Saskatchewan, about her design of a postcard for Easter, seen here. We received a bundle of them, and they've already been written and shipped to Ukraine. You can read about Connie's inspiration for the design in an article in this newsletter, "Saskatchewan artist reflects on Ukraine in postcard design". If you want some of her cards, you can reach out to Connie via her Prairie Reflection [Facebook page](#). The symbolism of these cards transcends Easter, making these cards beautiful works for any time you want to send support to Ukraine.

All this is to say that you don't have to look too far to find creativity, support and kindness. It's here. In abundance.



You can remind Members of Parliament of your support for Ukraine

Now into the 3rd year since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, we can remind 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.

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

MPs email addresses are 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 over 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.

As your constituent, I urge you to stand with Ukraine.

I look forward to hearing from you where you stand, in relation to Ukraine.

[YOUR SIGNATURE]



Please ... share our website as widely as you can – 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](#). Again, write to us. We're happy to offer our support for your efforts. Yes, we can send you cards!



Recapping our gratitudes:

- Thank you to those who have sent us postage stamps and postcards. Every stamp and postcard carries a whole lot of love and care to women and men on the front lines who need extra doses. A postal hug.
- 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. And if you have suggestions, please share!
- Thank you to all of the various groups who have invited us to conduct postcard-writing workshops. Everyone is so welcoming, kind and generous. The sense of community within the groups of people who participate in these workshops results in many thoughtful, caring and meaningful messages of support for Ukraine's Defenders.



Remember: your cards do make a difference ... as Liudmyla tells us–

“

I tell my sons, relatives and work colleagues about you. People are very happy and grateful for the support. Sometimes we feel strong and stable, but sometimes from nervous tension we fall into disappointment. We are afraid that Russia is still stronger and larger in the number of its madmen who go under bullets on orders. Then we remember our grandparents, who survived the Second World War, and again begin to believe that we will endure and live on.

– Liudmyla

UK Branch News and Updates

By Helen



Plathy from the UK branch is away from home this month. But, before heading out, she collected more donations for orphans in Ukraine. These children's items join the March 7th Yorkshire Aid Convoy to Ukraine.