



Postcards to the Front

International Newsletter

August 2024

Ukraine
Australia
Canada

August 24th

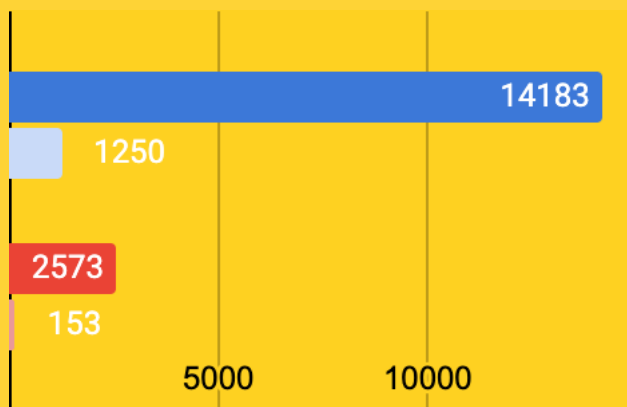


Independence Day

Volume 2
Issue 1

Graphics @jeniasnotes

A Month in Postcards



This month our postcard warriors from Australia sent 1,250 cards and from Canada sent 153 cards. Australia's total sent is now 14,183 cards and Canada's is now 2,420.

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

In this Issue

About	2
Our Defenders need your attention	3
By Andrii	
Let's write some Ukrainian!	6
The making of postcard art, for Ukraine's Defenders	7
By Helen	
Gold Medal performance by the Australian/Singaporean Team.....	12
By Peter Ramadge	
Canada Branch News and Updates	13
By Helen	

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://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!

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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Our Defenders need your attention

By Andrii

My name is Andrii. I'm from Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine. This city is located near the wonderful mountains – the Carpathians.



Figure 1: Map of Ukraine.

Before the full-scale invasion, I actively taught children and adults to dance. Every week we went to competitions, master classes. We lived a carefree life. And now, many students have moved abroad, many dance couples have broken up, competitions are not held so often.

In the first days of the war, together with my wife and friends, we began to actively help people who were fleeing the war from eastern and central Ukraine. We looked for housing for them, helped them with food and clothes.



Figure 2: Andrii posing with two students: dance competition winners.



Figure 3: Andrii and friend.

Why did I volunteer? It is difficult to answer this question. On February 25, 2022 (the day after the full-scale invasion), I felt that I had to do something to help. I remember that in the morning my military friend called me and said that I urgently needed to find sleeping bags or mattresses, as many military men have arrived and there are no available places for them to spend the night.

And so it all began.

Many friends supported me and we began to help both the military and displaced persons.

Our Defenders need our attention very much.

More than once I saw the tears of soldiers when they read children's postcards. It seems like a small thing, but for them it is something more.

I would really like the whole world to know – Ukraine continues to live, we do not give up, we move on.

In the break between work, we run to the warehouse, buy everything necessary for the military, look for drones, for starlinks, for example, and send them to our Defenders. And then we return to our work.



More than once I saw the tears of soldiers when they read children's postcards. It seems like a small thing, but for them it is something more.

— Andrii

Honestly, after our victory, and it will be very soon, it will be very unusual for us that we no longer need to volunteer, that we do not need to sit on the phone for hours to look for a car for the military to the east, that we do not need to look for housing for displaced people. Although even before the war, my friends and I helped shelters with animals and a nursing house.

After the victory, I believe and know that the number of tourists will increase. Together, we will climb the largest mountain of the Carpathians, Hoverlu, swim in the Black Sea, take a walk along the Khreschatyk in Kyiv, and invite everyone to my mother's for borscht and dumplings.

Thank you for your daily support of our Ukraine.

Let's write some Ukrainian!

Try one, or a couple, of these Ukrainian phrases on your cards. After all, what better time to express our support and affection by trying to write in Ukrainian?! And don't worry if you get it perfect. We are told that your effort and thoughtfulness mean a lot!

Hello!	Привіт!
We didn't forget about you	ми не забуваємо про вас
We are proud of you	Ми пишаємося вами
We wish you health and happiness	Ми бажаємо тобі здоров'я і щастя
Our country stays with Ukraine	наша країна ЗА Україну
You are the heartbeat of Ukraine	Ти серцебиття України
Don't give up	Не здавайтеся!
Bless Ukraine	Благослови Україну
With love <i>(at the end of the letter)</i>	З турботою



Figure 4 & 5: Who you are supporting

The making of postcard art, for Ukraine's Defenders

By Helen

Since she was a child, growing up in Croatia, Antich [which is her creative name] has collected stamps.

But like most collections, her stamps began to pile up. Mostly, those stamps “that aren’t good for proper collecting; i.e., with chipped edges, missing corners and similar damage that occurs when stamps travel. Sometimes,” she added, “you could also unintentionally damage a stamp when removing it from paper.”

What to do with the growing pile of damaged stamps?

Being a self-described “crafty person”, Antich made the logical step to using the damaged stamps for stamp art. And she quickly discovered that she liked giving them “a new life”.

Her initial efforts were tentative. Of course, she made mistakes, as she learned. Eventually, Antich had the idea to create silhouette postcards of different objects, using stamps.

For her first silhouette postcards, Antich made a shaped hole in postcard stock, but found the effort to fill in the hole with stamps to be quite difficult. So, she started to do some research on the Internet about stamp art, and there she learned “what I was doing wrong ... I needed to cut the shape, glue the stamps on the shape, and then glue the shape to the postcard surface.”

Since that a-ha moment, ideas simply popped into her head, often randomly. There were animal silhouettes, such as dog, cat, koala, kangaroo, hedgehog and so on. One day, while watching TV, she decided to try to make a panda.

And then, she thought, she’d make some fruit designs; maybe strawberries. But she



Figure 6: Tea pot silhouette postcard created by Antich.

didn't have enough red stamps. However, her abundant stash of green stamps led her to create a green apple stamp creation.

Antich continues to find ideas in her everyday life, as well as is inspired by the work of other postcard creators who use stamps in their creations. You could call this art *stampix*, that is, *postcard art that uses stamps*.

Every *stampix* that Antich creates begins with an idea, then a "messy process" of searching through her damaged stamps stash, where she will find – or not – the colours needed, or the relevant images that she might use. Or both.

When she doesn't have the colour she wants, Antich quickly pivots to a different concept. For example, "one time I wanted to do a butterfly shape out of only butterfly themed stamps, but I was missing a few to finish. While looking for the last one or two [needed], I located a bunch of horse stamps, so I made a horse shaped card. Then I chose many lovely green colour stamps, so I made a turtle. I didn't get my initial thought but made two lovely cards nevertheless."



Figure 7: Cow shaped silhouette card by Antich.

Isn't that often the way with the creative process? Process ignites inspiration.

The process also gives Antich some peace. Postcard-making "relaxes me after a hard day at work. It is ... mind relaxation and, as a result, I create something lovely. I'm also very happy to send my handmade cards to someone else and to receive a positive review."

What is it about postcard joy?

For Antich, it's the joy that she derives through her creative process, and then when she sends the card to someone who often tells her that her creation gave them joy.

For us at *Postcards to the Front*, there is the joy derived through choosing a card, then writing a personal message of support to a Defender who needs a bit of sunshine in their day. And then, we imagine ... will the card make them smile? Make them feel warm and cared for?

Initially, Antich created her *stampix* to share with family and friends. Then, after she joined [Postcrossing](#), she was reluctant to share her creations with Postcrossers. Eventually, though, she decided to send them out into the world, offering them, “little by little to people who like handmade cards.” After receiving a lot of positive comments, she wanted to share them with many more people.



Figure 8: Train shaped silhouette postcard by Antich.

One thankyou note that she received about one of her creations, “made my day, month and a year. The recipient was so happy with the card and wrote that the card will be so cherished and that she is hoping that I took a picture of the card for everyone to enjoy since she is unable to take one on her own. Generally speaking, everyone who received my handmade cards liked the idea behind it, my creativity and my realization of the postcard. Especially if I made them a custom card according to their wishes.”

Antich then discovered a discussion forum on the Postcrossing site where Postcrossers shared images of their postcard creations. She decided to take the plunge and began to share some images of hers in the forum.

“As I got a lot of great feedback and hearts [likes], I took a leap of faith and made a thread to offer cards. It is still running today after almost four years!” Her page is aptly titled: “Offering handmade postcard collages ... make a wish and I can make a stamp collage for you.”

Antich has made hundreds of different cards for Postcrossers. Most ideas originate in her own creative mind. She then posts them for people to choose. Some people want her postcard creations written and mailed to them. Occasionally, some people want to swap cards with her. And for others, she said, she’ll send “blank cards in an envelope that people use as birthday cards or just to write to someone else.”

Most importantly, Antich wants “to share my cards, and this way I give stamps a new life. In return I get new stamps either for my collection or to use in future creations. I also got a lot of different teabags to try since I am an avid tea drinker and collect teabags. Essentially,

I want to share my work according to recipient wishes and to receive something that I like in return.

If you haven't already realized, after reading a few articles in this newsletter that mention the Postcrossing project and community, Antich symbolizes the mission of Postcrossing:

- *The goal of this project is to allow anyone to send and receive postcards from all over the world!*
- **Why?** *Simply because ... there are lots of people who like to receive real mail. Receiving postcards from different places in the world (many of which you probably have never heard of!) can turn your mailbox into a box of surprises — and who wouldn't like that?*

Indeed, who *wouldn't* like that?

Certainly Defenders like a happy mail surprise during these hard times.

After seeing Antich's creations on the Postcrossing website, Australian postcard warrior, Anne, asked Antich whether she'd be interested in creating a design for Ukraine's Defenders.

"I was really happy to do so," Antich told us, "and in the end, to my joy, I managed to create three!"



Figure 9: Antich hand-crafting silhouette postcards for Ukraine's Defenders.

Antich works alone, in her quiet crafting space, but these three cards for *Postcards to the Front* are another story.

"It was great to collaborate with other people to create these postcards," Antich shared. "It gives a different perspective on things which are sometimes missed when you work on your own. Also, all the lovely people I collaborated with gave me new ideas and without them I wouldn't be able to make the postcards.

When she asked us for ideas, she repeatedly heard a desire for yellow/blue themes.

"But I don't have enough yellow stamps," she told us.

Normally, friends and family supply Antich with lots of stamps. Whatever they have. She also sometimes swaps her handmade cards for stamps in any condition so she can use them for future postcards.

So, we put out a call to Postcrossers and to our friends and family this past spring asking for donations of used yellow and blue stamps. Yellow, especially.

And they came!

“Thanks to a lot of great people all over the World,” Antich beamed, “but mostly in Canada, Australia, the USA, and Ukraine, we gathered lots of yellow stamps and I was able to create the three postcard designs.”

Antich’s first design for *Postcards to the Front* was the tryzub, then the heart and, finally, the sunflower.

Aren’t they lovely?!



Figure 10: Tryzub, Ukraine Heart, and You are the heartbeat of Ukraine created by Antich (Croatia). Finish design by Jean-Michel Komarnicki (Canada). Printed by Coda Studios (Canada).

Antich tells us that she’s got some other ideas. Stay tuned ...

And if you’re wondering, Antich does not sell her *stampix* creations, and she has never had them mass created. “Some people suggested to me that I could do so, but I never had the time. This is the first time my cards have been mass printed, and I am so proud that these cards are for writing to Ukraine’s Defenders.”

And we’re so grateful to have such beautiful cards to write to Ukraine’s Defenders.

Gold Medal performance by the Australian/Singaporean Team

By Peter Ramadge

On the 3rd of August I received an email from Tamara saying *Guys! Awesome news! One organisation reached out to me saying they are supporting 80 brigades, heard about our project and asked for at least 3000 postcards signed!*

It was a bit like one of those good news/bad news jokes.

I decided to break the rules regarding contacting our Postcard Warriors. Normally the only contact we have where all of them are messaged is via the Monthly Newsletter. I thought this was a situation of *better to beg forgiveness rather than to ask for permission*.

I figured out that we would need at least one thousand cards sent in August to make a real difference. The best month we ever had was 1,210 cards in March 2024 and the timing of this news had cut out two days in August already.

So, I hinted to people that over 1,000 should be our goal.

What a Team we have here! On the 21st of August we have sent 29 packages to Tamara which contain 1,113 postcards. This is the most amazing group I have ever been involved with.

My focus was on the score board for this, and I wasn't looking at the *total of cards sent* column. The Team has broken the 14,000 card barrier (I can hear voices in my head saying we don't believe in barriers).

Our total cards sent is now sitting at a healthy 14,046.

These figures are as of the 21st of August, so there will be higher scores in the Monthly Newsletter. You are such a magnificent Team!

Canada Branch News and Updates

By Helen

We received a second invitation from St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Oshawa, Ontario, to bring postcards for parishioners to write to Defenders. That was our Ukraine Independence Day project!

What a wonderfully supportive group made up of people of all ages, from the very young to the Babas. Some wrote in English, but most wrote in Ukrainian, including newcomers to Canada. A few expressed their gratitude for our efforts, in their tears. Hugs all around. Thank you all for your love and support! Дякую!

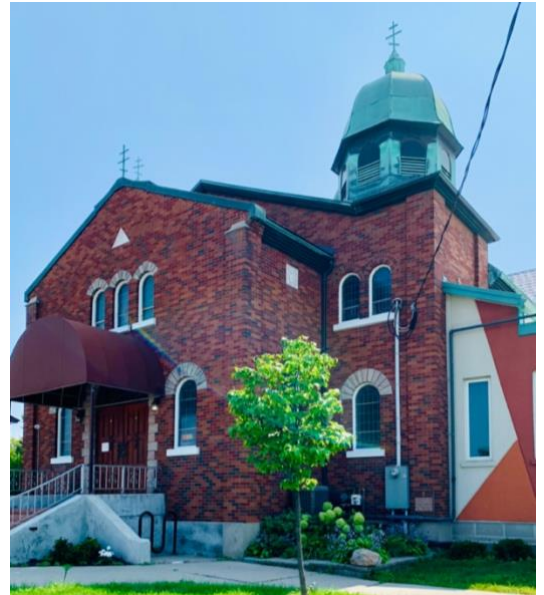


Figure 11: St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Oshawa.



Figure 12: St. John's parishioners writing postcards to Ukraine's Defenders.



Figures 13-16: Postcard writing session in Oshawa.





Pleas from Ukraine for more postcards

This month we've received several important messages from our founder, Tamara. Despite frequent power outages in Ukraine, due to massive destruction of infrastructure.

First, she advised that she had received requests for postcards for 80 brigades. That's about 3000 postcards.

Clearly, your messages of support have made an impact! :-)

Out went the call to our supporters, and already cards are landing in our mailbox. Thank you!

We've also had requests from postcard warriors for free cards. Like these ones, hot off the presses: tryzub, heart, *You are the Heart of Ukraine*. Need some cards? Let us know. Need some tips for writing your cards? Click [here](#). You can also read about the creation of these cards by Antich (Croatia) in a feature article in this issue of the newsletter, *The making of postcard art, for Ukraine's Defenders*.



Figure 17: Cards created for Postcards to the Front by Antich (Croatia), finishing design by Jean-Michel Komarnicki (Canada), and printing by Coba Studios (Canada).

Then, another plea from Tamara –

“

I was so calm for the last half a year. And now they are like crazy asking me for more mental support [postcards]. Today, I was asked for 800 more ... Defenders need us and it's pleasant and scary at the same time.

Before I was thinking our project is more kind of complimentary [to the care packages]. Volunteers write me all the time that Defenders are crying while reading cards. So they need more, as the cards mean a lot.

Thank you again guys for supporting Ukraine. It's not your country, but you are the kindest people I know. Thank you.

And then, another plea ... *More cards, please!*

It seems that we've hit critical mass!

The word is out!

Postcard messages of support *are* making a difference in the lives of Defenders. They love to receive your messages. Even if they make them cry tears of joy.

Well done everyone! Thank you for your continued support!



Figure 18: Ukraine's Defenders happy with your messages of support.

Your cards boost morale. Your messages have become a vital aspect to support the mental health of Defenders; that is, it matters that they know that the world hasn't forgotten them, that we support them, and that we care. Thank you!

[Contact us](#) to let us know if you need some FREE cards to write to Defenders.



Birthday Wishes for Tamara!

In the [June issue](#) of this newsletter, we wrote about *Postcards to the Front* at the Odesa Pavilion for the Oshawa Fiesta Week celebrations; a celebration of Oshawa's many cultures held each year in Oshawa for over fifty years.

Visitors wrote a couple of hundred beautiful messages of support to Ukraine's Defenders. Many, in Ukrainian. Including Oshawa Mayor Dan Carter and several area Councillors, Miss Odesa and Miss Krakow.

All week, we watched the Odesa Dancers perform, including their powerfully evocative finale, "The Heart of Ukraine." We ate way too many cabbage rolls, varenyky (pierogi), shishkabob, and borscht (no, you can never eat too much borscht!). And we met a lot of kind and caring people, including the folks at other tables selling wares as fundraisers to support Ukraine.

On learning that our dear founder in Ukraine, Tamara, had an upcoming birthday, a group of 'table-sitters' wrote her some nice birthday greetings. On postcards, of course.

Still, I wanted to send Tamara something special from the week. Yes, the postcards were special, of course.

So, I bought her the t-shirt celebrating 50 years of Odesa Pavilion. From Oshawa, Ontario. :-)

It has arrived!

Doesn't she look happy in her unexpected birthday gift from Canada?



Figure 19: Postcards to the Front project founder Tamara.



Christmas in July

WooHoo! Cards have begun to arrive for this year's *Christmas in July* campaign. From Germany, the United States and Canada. Awesome! Thank you all!

All cards that **arrive in our Millbrook post box by the end of September will make their way to front line Defenders in time for Christmas.**

If you haven't yet written your holiday greetings to Defenders, and maybe you need some help with adding a Ukrainian phrase on your card, here are a few for you to consider. Some writing in Ukrainian absolutely brings a huge happy smile!

Let Christmas light to shine mentally.

(a bit of wordplay as they often don't have electricity) Нехай світло Різдва осяє вас духовно.

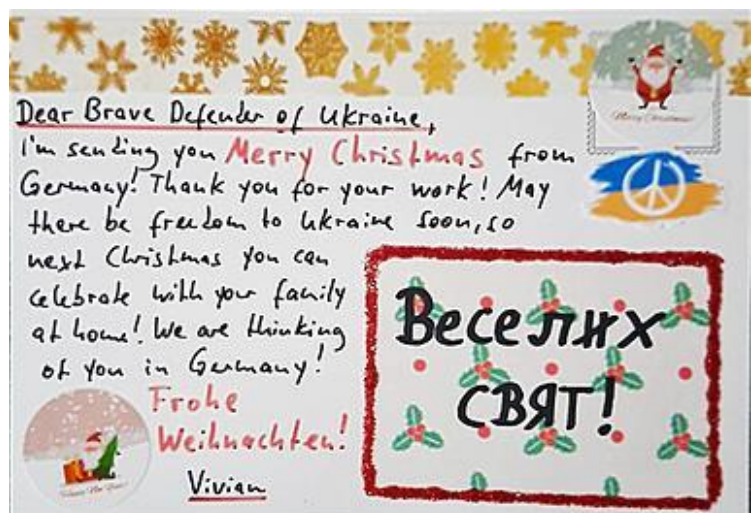
Happy holidays! We pray for you! Зі святами! Ми молимося за вас!

Merry Christmas! I wish you a kindness and bravery! З Різдвом! Бажаю вам добра і звитяги!

Slava Ukraini! (Glory to Ukraine!) Слава Україні!

Please note: Ukraine is a country of many faiths. Also, not all Ukrainians practice a faith. Therefore, we encourage you to write heartfelt messages of good cheer and love, rather than a strictly religious message.

In case you need some inspiration, here is a sample card from Christmas 2023 –



Your messages of love and support will be a precious gift to a Defender who will likely feel rather alone at Christmas time, away so long from the warmth and love of home, family and friends.



Our gratitudes

- Thank you to those who have sent us postage stamps and postcards. You help make it possible for us to do all that we can from home base in Millbrook, Ontario.
- Thank you to those who have subscribed to us at [Postcards to the Front](#). Your subscription makes it easier for us to communicate with you.
- Thank you for spreading the word about *Postcards to the Front* to others. These connections help grow our efforts to support Ukraine.
- Thank you for your suggestions! You help us grow and become better at what we do!
- Thank you to the community groups and individuals who have invited us to conduct postcard-writing workshops. These workshops generate many thoughtful, caring and meaningful messages of support for Ukraine's Defenders.



Do you have questions? Do you have unused stamps to pass along to our team? Or blank cards? Be in touch: postcardstothefront.canada@gmail.com

Have some written cards ready for us to send on to Ukraine? Please see the [contact section](#) for our address. You can get up to five cards in an envelope for the price of one domestic stamp (currently, 99 cents). Maybe add one or two unused stamps to help us get cards to Ukraine? ;-)

Thank you for your continued support of Defenders of Ukraine!



Need cards? We have ***lots!***

Drop us a line by email at postcardstothefront.canada@gmail.com, and we'll be happy to send you a batch of postcards that you can write to Defenders. FREE!

And please ... invite family and friends to write cards. Maybe you want to organize a postcard-writing bee? Check our website for tips, [How to Run a Postcard-Writing Workshop](#).

Share and Subscribe!

The best way to stay informed about Postcards to the Front is to [subscribe to our website](#). It's easy and fast. And please ... share our website as widely as you can – postcardstothefrontcanada.com. Sharing helps others connect with this project.

We need your help!

We've been fortunate that a number of individuals and organizations have sponsored packages of postcards to Ukraine by donating stamps. Our stamp stocks have run out. Any number of unused stamps that you can send along – any denomination – will be much appreciated! Don't forget to let us know your email address so we can thank you.



Thank you for your continued support of Defenders of Ukraine!



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