

Postcards to the Front

International Newsletter

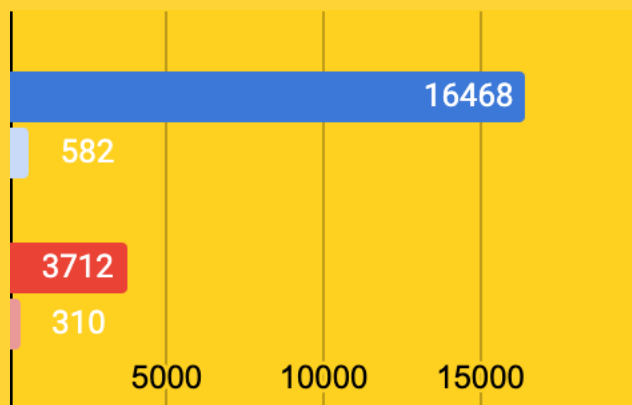
November 2024

Ukraine
Australia
Canada



Volume 2
Issue 4

A Month in Postcards



This month our postcard warriors from Australia sent 582 cards and from Canada sent 310 cards. Australia's total sent is now 16,468 cards and Canada's is now 3,712.

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://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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Life During the War: A Personal Story from Tamara, Ukraine

By Tamara

Hello, dear friends in the *Postcards to the Front* community. Today, I want to share a piece of my life — a story about how it feels to live in Ukraine during this war. Perhaps you've wondered how I, as the founder of this project, am navigating through these times. Here's my honest account.

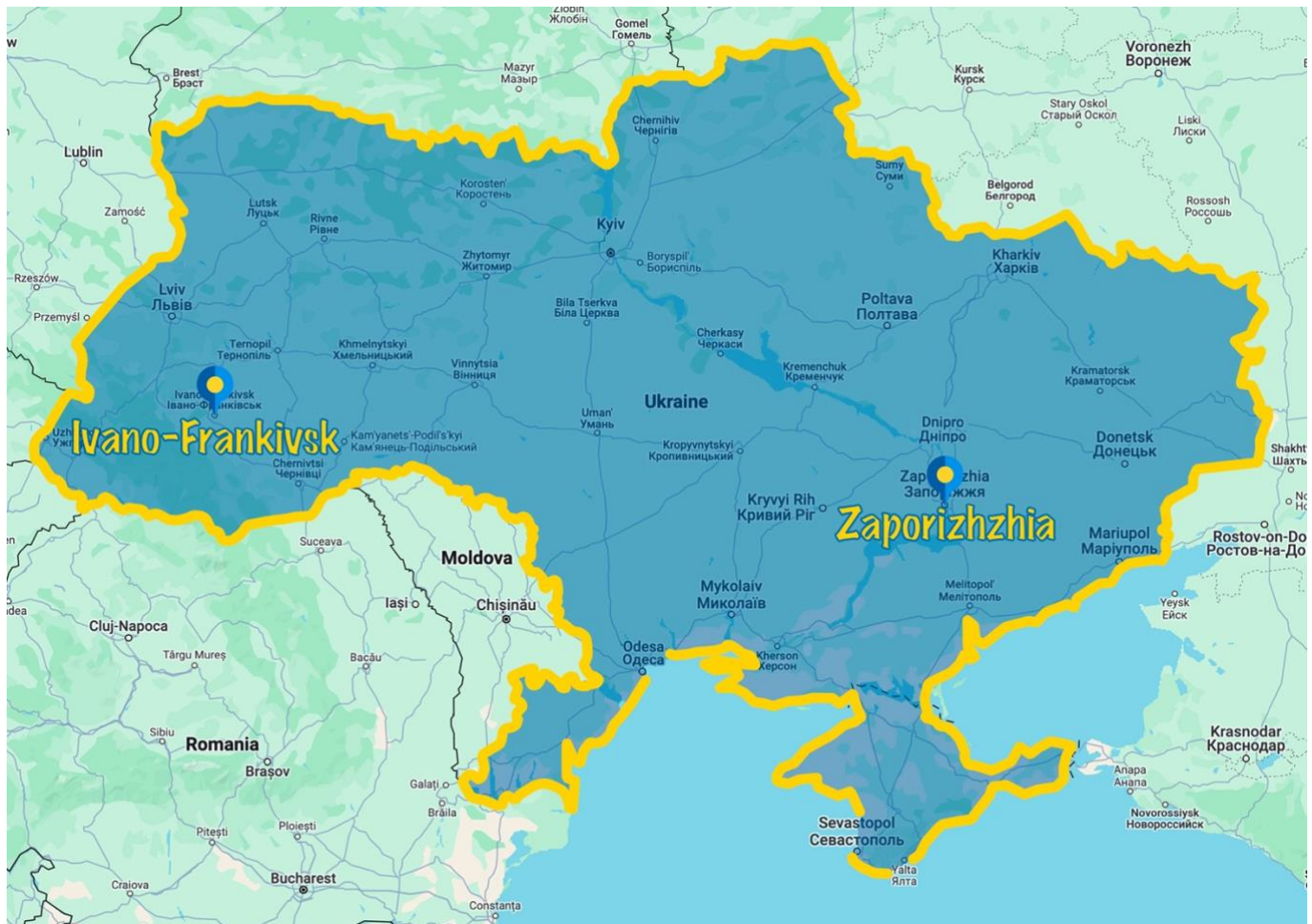


Figure 1: Map of Ukraine.

The hardest part of this war for me was leaving my hometown of Zaporizhzhia. Zaporizhzhia was more than just a city; it was home. I loved my life there. I had my own apartment, my mother still lives there, and many of my closest friends are there, too. But the constant danger pushed me to make a choice: safety over comfort. So, six months ago,

my boyfriend, our cat, and I packed all our belongings into a small van — including furniture and even my bandura — and moved to Ivano-Frankivsk.



Figure 2: Tamara and Dima.



Figure 3: Tamara, playing her bandura.

Ivano-Frankivsk is a beautiful city. Its best feature? It's far from Russia. Life here is calmer compared to Zaporizhzhia. But no matter how wonderful a new place might be, it's never truly home. I miss my city deeply—its streets, its rhythm, its spirit. The feeling of living in your own space, one you've created and loved, is incomparable to renting someone else's. Every morning here, I wake up, check the news from Zaporizhzhia, and text my mom to make sure she's alive. This has become a ritual: "Was it loud? Was it close? Are you okay? Is your home okay? Your car?" These small questions keep me grounded, but they also remind me how fragile life has become.



Figure 4: Mama Tamara and Tamara.



Figure 5: Tamara feeding a Highland Cow (from Scotland) at Gutsul Land theme park in Bukovel, Carpathian Mountains, Ivano-Frankivsk region.

Even in Ivano-Frankivsk, the echoes of war are impossible to ignore. I see young men stopped on the streets by the military to verify their draft status. I worry about my boyfriend and our friends—many have already been called to the front. When I visit Zaporizhzhia, the streets feel empty except for soldiers, women, and children. The reality of war is stark there, but even here in the west, it lingers.

Living under war changes everything, even how we process fear. Ukrainians are not afraid anymore. Air raid sirens, explosions — they don't scare us. What we feel is exhaustion. Imagine working non-stop for three days without sleep, unsure of where you are or what's next. That's how we feel every day. Tired but enduring. It's a strange strength, born from necessity.

I know this exhaustion sometimes makes us seem distant or ungrateful. If I've ever missed replying to your messages or failed to express enough joy or thanks, please forgive me. It's not that we don't appreciate your support—we do, deeply. Your postcards, your words, your kindness — they mean the world to us. But at the end of a long day fighting through blackouts, checking on loved ones, and just trying to make life work, my energy often runs out before my gratitude does.

This war has taught me so much about resilience, about adapting, and about the power of community. It's also taught me that even when the world feels like it's falling apart, small acts of kindness — like sending a postcard — can bring immense comfort. So, thank you for being part of this project, for supporting Ukraine, and for showing that even in the darkest times, there is light.

With gratitude and love,

Tamara



Figure 6: Carpathian Mountains, Ivano-Frankivsk region.

How Fedia took *Postcards to the Front* into Chicago

By Helen

After WWII, Ukrainian Democratic Youth Association (commonly shortened as ‘ODUM’) was established in Canada and the United States by people from Eastern Ukraine who wanted to raise their children in the same values and traditions as they had back in Ukraine. Each year, ODUM youth (children and young adults) gather to celebrate their Ukrainian heritage, as well as to network with other Ukrainian youth from all over North America. That’s where we met Fedia Kourbatov, at our booth in September at ODUM Zustrich in Clarington, Ontario.



Figure 7: Fedia Kourbatov.

After writing a few postcards for Defenders, Fedia told us about MAK Chicago, a shop that his mother, Orysia Kourbatov, was opening in October.

Fedia has strong ideals about his role, as a Ukrainian American, to “uplift my Ukrainian culture constantly. I felt the initiative [*Postcards to the Front*] did this; that it is an easy way for others to contribute to the war effort.” He instantly recognized that the simplicity of writing messages of support to Ukraine’s Defenders would easily be something he could encourage others to do.

As his mother, Orysia, was about to open her MAK Chicago shop, he decided that it would be a good idea to dedicate a table in the store to postcard-writing for Ukraine’s Defenders. In this way, he “hoped a lot of Ukrainians and local Americans would write letters to the heroes on the front lines.” And, he added, our [translation guide](#) “set us up for success”. Although, he and his mom have “tweaked it a little to make it even easier to use for non-Ukrainians.”



Figure 8: MAK Chicago Shop logo.



Figure 9: Fedia and Orysia in MAC Chicago Shop.

Fedia shared that he is, therefore, “very grateful because I met Helen who introduced me to this amazing project” so he, and others, can make a difference in the lives of Ukrainians.

Of course, we, at *Postcards to the Front*, are grateful for Fedia’s initiative and support, introducing the project in Chicago and encouraging American visitors to MAK Chicago Shop to write messages to Ukraine’s Defenders.

Ultimately, Fedia hopes that his efforts, and the postcards written by shop visitors “give Defenders hope and a feeling that people are looking over them

Fedia found that the best way to inspire others to write to Ukraine’s Defenders was to remind them “that a big component to victory is keeping up morale. These postcard messages do exactly that and show to the soldiers that people all over the world are supporting them and thinking about them.”

So, at MAK Chicago Shop, where over 50 Ukrainian creators are featured, Orysia and Fedia not only show Americans how talented Ukrainians are, creating income streams and exposure for Ukrainian artists, they also educate visitors about Ukraine as well as encourage visitors to write messages of support to Ukraine’s Defenders.



Figure 10: Supporters of Ukraine's Defenders in MAC Chicago Shop.

because they are constantly in our thoughts and prayers ... that the support from other nations is real. Something about holding a physical card and seeing [that] it came from across the world brings that support from the whole world to life.”

As we near the third anniversary since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, it is clear to Fedia that postcard messages of support make a difference, and, he shared, “we are excited to be a part of this initiative and to keep growing together!”

Thank you, Orysia and Fedia, for your contributions to support Ukrainian culture and for your efforts the encourage others to help boost morale at the front lines!



Figure 11: Supporters of Ukraine's Defenders in MAC Chicago Shop.



Figures 12-15: Supporters of Ukraine's Defenders in MAC Chicago Shop.



Let's write some Ukrainian!

By Helen and Tamara

We are now collecting cards to ship to Ukraine early in the New Year. Our goal is to especially help boost morale amongst Defenders as the **third anniversary** since the full-scale invasion lands on **February 24th**.

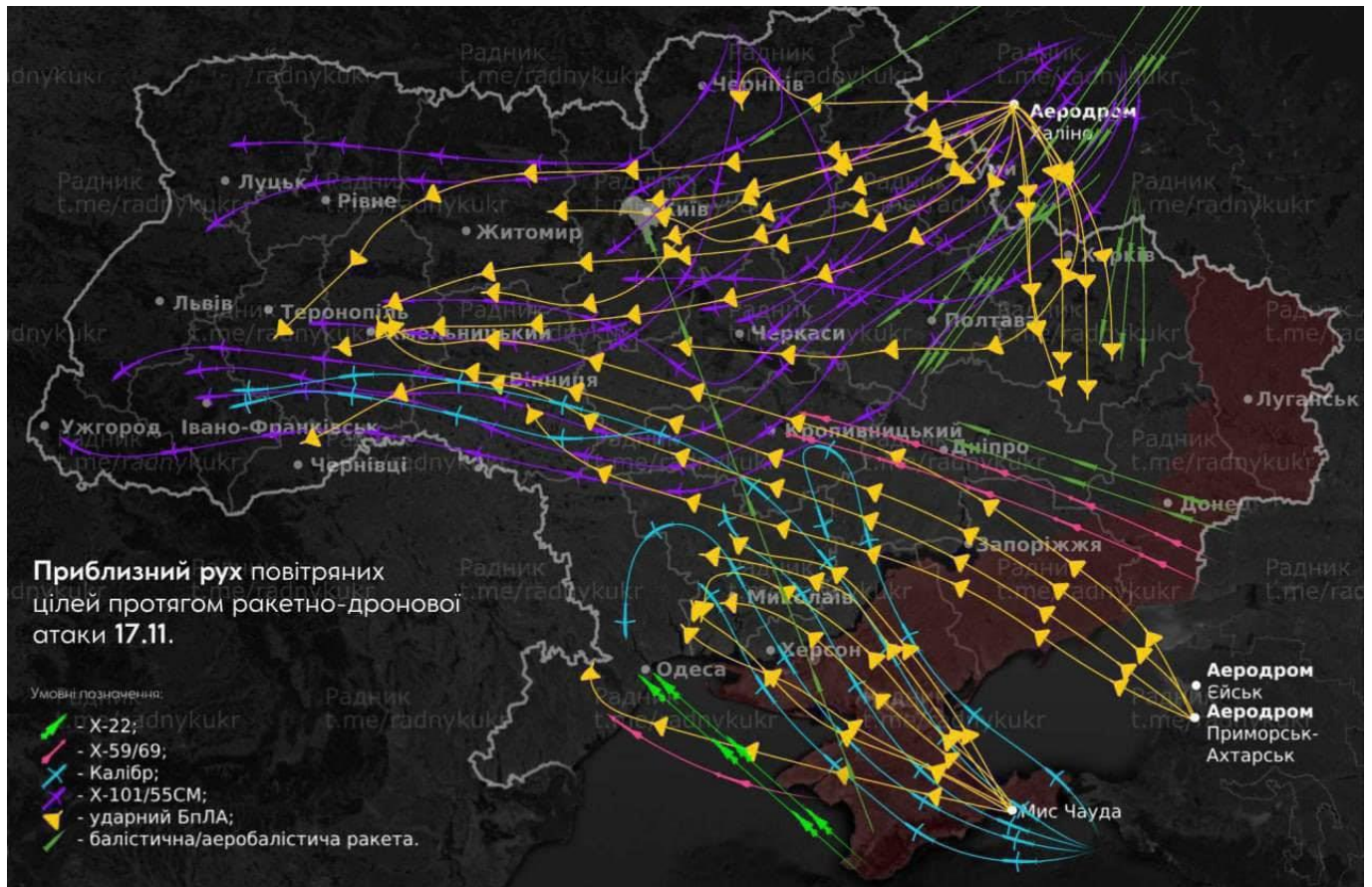


Figure 16: Map of Ukraine's sky.

This is what Ukraine's skies look like, day and night. Thousands of drone and missile attacks. Noise. Destruction. Casualties. Terror for nearly three years! Your messages of support are beacons of light during very hard times.

If you have a few moments over the holidays, think "hearts" for February, the month of love, and write a few messages of support to Ukraine's Defenders.

Try one, or a couple, of the below Ukrainian phrases on your cards. And don't worry if you don't get it perfect. We are told that your effort and thoughtfulness reach their hearts!

You can find even more phrases [here](#). Thank you!

Hello! Привіт!

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

War will end and you will always be
heroes. Війна закінчиться, і ви завжди будете
героями.

You are defending your motherland. You
are brave and courageous. Ви захищаєте свою батьківщину, ви
мужні і хоробрі.

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 care,
(at the end of the letter) З турботою,

Vintage cards donation benefits

Postcards to the Front

By Anne

Peter recently received an incredible donation of hundreds of vintage tourist postcards. An Australian supporter heard about his work and gifted her parents' collection of postcards from their extensive travels.

We would like to honour her parents by sending these cards to Ukraine. If you are from one of the below countries, or have a connection to that country, Peter will send you the cards. Just send him a note: ramadgep@gmail.com

Countries we have vintage cards available from are:

Countries	Number of cards	Countries	Number of cards
Austria	35	Germany	229
Bosnia and Herzegovia	1	Greece	6
Belgium	6	Japan	9
Canada	1	Jugoslavija	1
China	2	Hong Kong	18
Croatia	2	Hungry	1
Czechia	1	India	1
Demark	4	Ireland	17
Egypt	3	Italy	11
Fiji	2	Malaysia	8
France	12	Malta	1

Countries	Number of cards
Netherlands	25
New Zealand	77
Norway	6
Papua New Guinea	10
Singapore	51
South Africa	1
Spain	5
Sweden	1
Switzerland	6
Taiwan	1
Thailand	1
Tonga	1
Türkiye	3
USA	1
UK	133
Yemen	4

If you write any of these cards, please share a photo of you writing and/or mailing them. We'd love to include it in our newsletter!

Australia Branch News and Updates

By Peter

> Christmas Traditions

What sort of Christmas traditions does your family have?

How do Christmas traditions start? One Christmas someone does something, and it just keeps being repeated.

I am asking all of you to add a tradition to your celebrations this year. I firmly believe this is going to be a one-off tradition. After Christmas lunch or dinner, or after opening the presents, whatever floats your boat with family and friends, gather everyone who is there (including the kids – especially the kids) to write a single postcard supporting Ukrainian Defenders. Keep in mind, though, that it's too late to write a Christmas greeting, as your card probably won't land in the hands of a Defender until February.

I have heaps of cards so all you have to do is figure out how many people will be there and let me know how many cards you need. I can send as many as you like.

I think this will be a once only tradition because I am pretty sure that the war will end in 2025. Poothing's economy is falling apart, he is losing between 1,500 to 2,000 troops per day in recent fighting.

This will enable all postcard warriors to have a common tradition this Christmas Day.

> Survey

I have set up a survey for feedback on the Newsletter. Access via:

<https://form.jotform.com/243261606656862>

Any comment would be greatly appreciated!

Canada Branch News and Updates

By Helen

To you, dear friends, we express deep gratitude for your support of this project and send you and your family Best Wishes for health and happiness.

Веселих свят! – Happy Holidays!

May Ukraine be free from aggression in 2025!

Слава Україні! – Glory to Ukraine!



Please continue to tell others about this project.

Ask family and friends to write cards. Involve your children and grandchildren.

Share our website – postcardstothefrontcanada.com. [Subscribe](#).



Each month we receive envelopes and packages of cards in the mail; some from regular writers and some from new writers. We also attend workshops or events, such as rallies, as well as send cards and 'how to' suggestions to individuals or groups planning their own postcard-writing events.

It's heartwarming to see that interest in and support of Ukraine does not wane. And, we're grateful for the continuity of support for Ukraine.

You will read in this month's Canada Branch news that, along with new contributors to the project, we have received repeat contributions of written postcards from local elementary school children, high school students from Poland, from St. Matthews Circle of Friends in Oshawa, and from the Russian embassy protesters in our capital city, Ottawa.

New to *Postcards to the Front*, we are thankful for the amazing effort by two sisters in Haliburton who set up a table at the *Gather Muskoka Community* event. Not only did they

invite visitors to the event to write messages of support, but they also went to a lot of effort to educate visitors about Ukrainian geography, history and culture. Well done Debbie and Terry!

We're also excited to share this month about the ambitious undertaking spearheaded by the *Shkilna Rada* community of Ukrainian Heritage Schools in Toronto. Cards have been distributed to the [weekend] Ukrainian heritage schools, where students of all ages will write messages of support to Ukraine's Defenders. Already, postcards written by students at *Yuri Lypa* school are on their way to the front lines. Outstanding!

Read on ...



Millbrook South Cavan Public School

Some of you may recall that [last year](#) we visited our local elementary school for workshops with Grade 5 students to write postcards.

We were welcomed back to the school this autumn, where Grade 5 students again learned how postal systems work, as well as wrote postcard messages to Ukraine's Defenders, to Canadian troops presently serving in Poland, and to our local members of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 402 (Millbrook). Students also attended this month's Remembrance Day ceremonies held at the village WWI cenotaph.



Figure 17: Jean-Michel helping students write in Ukrainian.

Our workshop with the students included a crash course in the Cyrillic alphabet. Students practiced the unfamiliar and challenging forms, first trying to write their own names, letter-for-letter. But that's not how to read or use the Ukrainian alphabet. Fortunately, Jean-Michel is Ukrainian and was able to explain the unique nature of each symbol as forming specific sounds. Once the students were liberated from the letter-to-letter notion, it was easier to learn to write their names in Ukrainian. With a little help. 😊

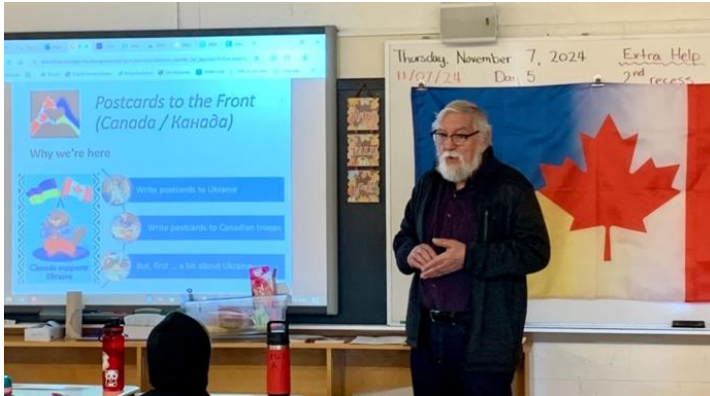


Figure 18: Jean-Michel speaking with Gr. 5 students at Millbrook South Cavan Public School.



Figure 19: Slogan at the Millbrook South Cavan Public School.

We noticed on the way to the classroom a large sign spanning the wall across the hall: *Mistakes are proof that you're trying.* Perhaps this explains the 'no fear' factor when it came to student efforts to write in a new language?

We always ask workshop participants to try to write at least one or two phrases in Ukrainian from a translation sheet that we provide. We believe that the effort to try to write some Ukrainian signals to the reader (a Defender) a respect for their culture. The Ukrainian culture.

Guess what the students did? Most insisted that they write strictly in Ukrainian! This, of course, took some time, but the rewards were great.

Confidence can be built when one tries something new and challenging. Then, taking a step back once the task is done to see and feel ... 'oh, wow! Look what I just did!' Pride.

Well done students! And thank you to Ms. Alksnis for inviting us to meet with her class.

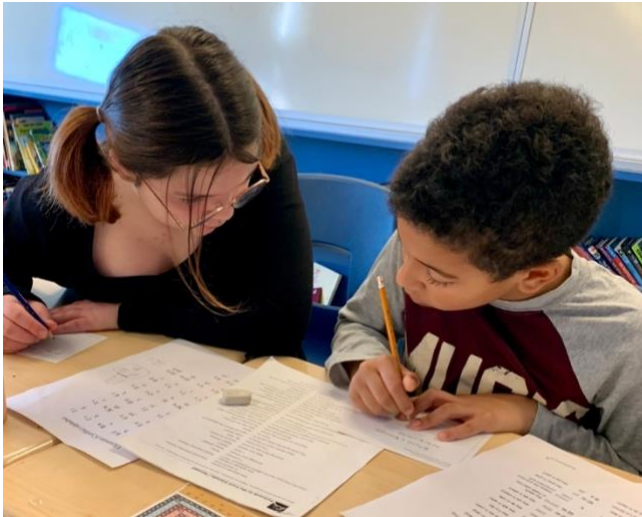
Thank you, Grade 5 students, for your lovely messages of support to those who serve the goal for freedom and peace, past and present, in Canada, abroad and in Ukraine.



Figure 20: Gr. 5 students working on their cards.



Figure 21: Samples of cards written to Defenders.



Figures 22-24: Students and their cards written to Canadian Veterans at Millbrook Legion Branch 402.



Figure 25: Samples of cards written to Canadian Armed Forces serving in Poland.

Figure 26: Ms. Alksnis's Grade 5 Class.





Shkilna Rada – Toronto Area Ukrainian Heritage Schools

We were invited last month to tell the members of *Shkilna Rada*, the Ukrainian Canadian School Board – Toronto Branch, about *Postcards to the Front*. Since then, principals have started to organize students enrolled in their schools to write postcard messages of support to Ukraine’s Defenders.



Figure 27: At the Shkilna Rada Board meeting office in Etobicoke.

The first batch of cards written by students at *Yuri Lypa Ukrainian Heritage Academy*, Toronto, is on the way to Ukraine. Dozens of heartfelt messages, in print and in drawings, written by children and youth to Ukraine’s Defenders.

More schools will write cards in the coming months.

We are told by Tamara at home base in Ukraine that messages from children provide a particularly special warmth to the hearts of Defenders who welcome the boost to their morale. Thank you, *Shkilna Rada*! Дякую!



Figures 28-29: Postcards to the Front meeting up with members of Shkilna Rada in Toronto area.



Figure 30: Cards written by students at Yuri Lypa Ukrainian Heritage Academy.



St. Matthews Circle of Friends, Oshawa

Members of *St. Matthews Circle of Friends* have become expert at writing heartfelt messages of support to Ukraine's Defenders. Thank you all for your continued support and for your kind messages of care and love to Ukraine's Defenders!



Figures 31-34: Members of St. Matthews Circle of Friends write postcard messages to Ukraine's Defenders.





Figure 35: Samples of cards written by members of St. Matthews Circle of Friends.

Polish students visit Canada with Polish Academy of Canada (PAC)

Several times each year, for about seven or eight years now, Jean-Michel and I meet with Polish high school students visiting on a Canada Study Tour for an intensive leadership training program organized by [Polish Academy of Canada \(PAC\)](#). They take time from their regular studies to learn about Canada, about Canada's roles and relationships in the world, and to develop distinct leadership skills.



Figure 36: Jean-Michel and Helen with the Polish students.

Alina, founder of PAC, explains when asked, “Why Canada?” –

As we continue to assess the political challenges around us today, it is important to remember the good that has (and can) come from our future leaders. Canada has earned its reputation as a country focused on making positive changes around the world. Canadians are making an impact with their EXCELLENT LEADERSHIP and GENEROSITY.

PAC encourages students to nurture their unique abilities, as well as encourages them to develop leadership skills so each can make a difference in the world.

And so, we conduct workshops for the Polish students that focus on Canadian identity, education, and career pathways. Since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, we have added another dimension to our workshops: global citizenship, from a Canadian perspective. We

now include discussion about the impacts of Russia's aggression against Ukraine on Europe as well as global socio-political and economic ramifications.

Never doubt that the youth of the world are interested in global events. They most certainly care about others, beyond their personal needs, desires and aspirations. They have questions and they want to make a difference in their own lives, as well as in the lives of others.

Thanks, once again, to Boston Pizza in Oshawa, Ontario for carving out space for our afternoon workshop, and for terrific hospitality! It always feels like home to us and to our Polish visitors. And thank you to the students who wrote beautiful messages of love and support to Ukraine's Defenders! Dziękuję bardzo!



Figures 37-42: Polish high school students on Canada Study Tour with Polish Academy of Canada.





Figures 43-44: The facilitator Alina and a Polish high school student showing the cards they wrote for the Defenders.

1000 Days

A thousand days of terror, destruction, and death is not the kind of anniversary one wants to celebrate. Nor is the upcoming 3rd anniversary since the full-scale invasion (February 24).

But, ... here we are. A thousand days of war. And a thousand days of Canadians doing many things to support Ukraine.

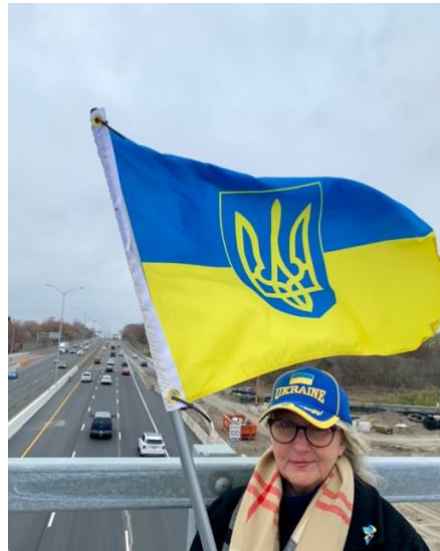
Across Canada, there were demonstrations and marches to mark the 1000 Days. More importantly, to show solidarity with Ukraine; to show that we haven't forgotten.

We joined others from Oshawa area to march the Simcoe Street bridge which spans over Highway 401 in Oshawa, Ontario. Canada's longest and busiest highway.

Each week since the invasion, local folk have demonstrated at the 401 bridge in support of Ukraine. It's a perfect spot, with thousands of vehicles passing under. Many honk their horns in support of the Ukrainian and Canadian flags that drivers see as they travel past.



Figure 45: 1000 Day rally for Ukraine in Oshawa.



Figures 46-52: 1000 Day rally for Ukraine at Simcoe Street Bridge over Highway 401, Oshawa.



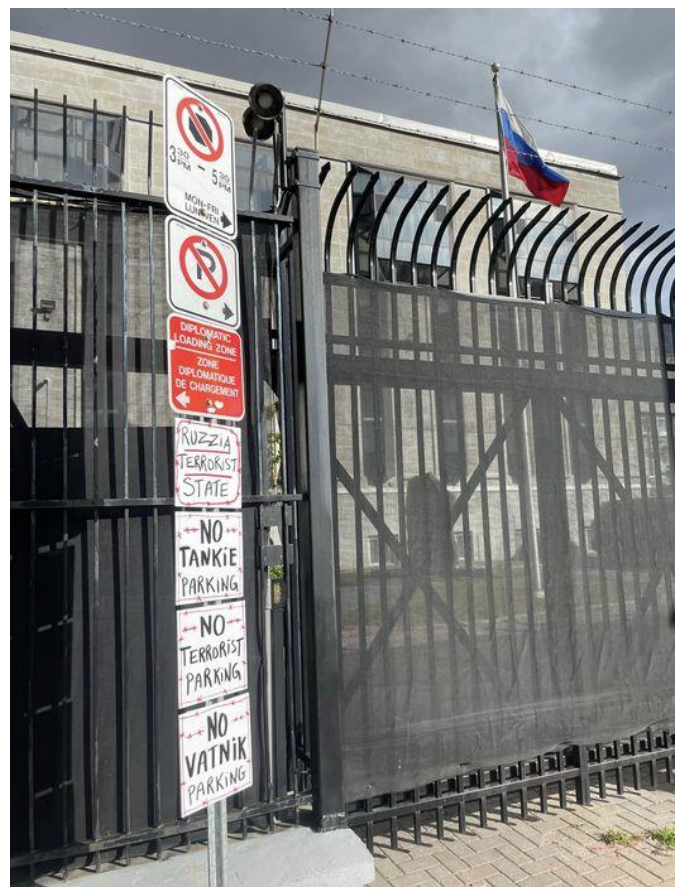
Russia Embassy Protestors, Ottawa, Ontario

Last month we introduced you to the [Russia Embassy \(Ottawa\) protesters](#) who have stood outside the embassy, every day since March 04, 2022, to protest Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

The protesters have written a few hundred postcard messages of support to Ukraine's Defenders, most of their own design, such as the one featured in the batch here (note the Freedom Bike card at top right corner). Their latest batch should arrive soon at the front lines.



Figure 53: Sample of cards written by Russia Embassy Protesters, Ottawa.



Figures 54-55: Props outside Russia Embassy in Ottawa by Protesters.

And, they most certainly maintain a sense of humour and a sense of irony in their protests, as seen in these two images.

Thank you all who continue to demonstrate daily at the embassy, as well as for your heartfelt messages of support and care to Ukraine's Defenders!

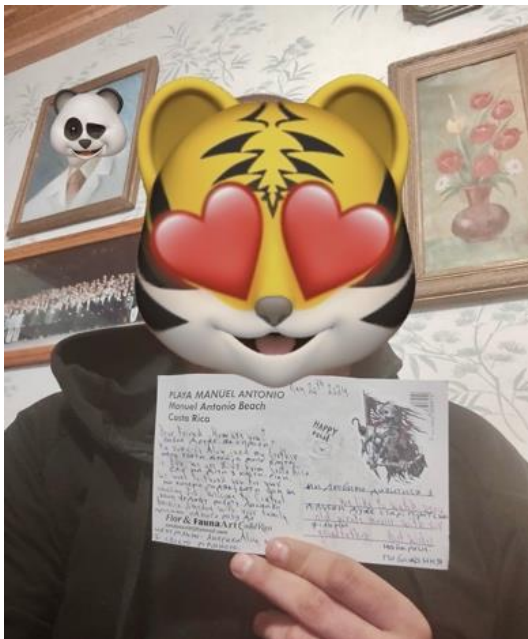
X (Twitter): @drkatems

Insta: @rep_ottawa

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RussianEmbassyProtesters>

More cards arrive at the front lines

With supplies, such as knitted scarves, netting, medical supplies, food, etc., your messages boost morale. They perform a vital role in supporting the mental health of Defenders. It matters to them, and to their families, that the world hasn't forgotten them, that we support them, and that we care. Thank you!



Figures 56-57: Ukraine's Defenders happy to read your words of encouragement.



Figure 58: Ukraine's Defenders happy to read your words of encouragement.

*[Last year](#) we wrote about Aloy and Edu, brothers in Costa Rica, who are regular writers to Defenders. Their latest batch was sent to the front lines via Plathy, in the United Kingdom.

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



Recapping 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. Click [here](#), if you don't already.

- 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?

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](#). Consider a group effort in the New Year, so that we can send a lot of messages of support in February, when the 3rd anniversary of the full-scale invasion rolls around.

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! Maybe include a couple in your envelope of written cards? Don't forget to let us know your email address so we can thank you.



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

And as Nadia in Zaporizhzhia region, Ukraine reminds us –



Postcard support gives strength and courage.

— Nadia