

Postcards to the Front

International Newsletter

January 2025

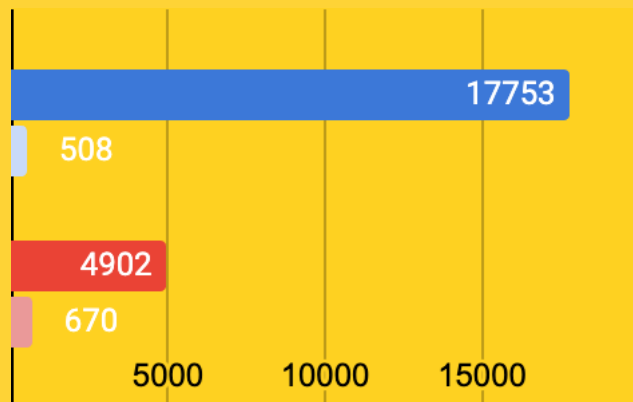
Ukraine
Australia
Canada



Photo credit: [Анатолій Штефан](#)
["Штірліц"](#)

Volume 2
Issue 6

A Month in Postcards



This month our postcard warriors from Australia sent 508 cards and from Canada sent 670 cards. Australia's total sent is now 17,753 cards and Canada's is now 4,902.

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

In this Issue

About2

News and Updates.....3

By Helen

Writing postcards to Defenders is a sad joy19

By Helen

Each postcard is a small piece of hope for a peaceful tomorrow21

By Irena (Kyiv)

A little something heals30

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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News and Updates

By Helen



Figure 1: Source - Meanwhile in Ukraine (Facebook).

February 24, 2025 marks the third anniversary of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia. This map tells the story of Ukraine's resistance and resilience. Seemingly, as a buffer for its neighbours.

Every postcard message of support sent to the front lines helps Defenders muster some strength to continue to fight another day for freedom, despite many challenges.

Let's keep reminding Ukraine's Defenders that the world still sees what's going on. That we haven't forgotten them. That we continue to support them. That we care.

As Irena writes in her letter published in this issue, “Your efforts, postcards and participation are valuable and visible for all Ukrainians, and the project, *Postcards to the Front*, is helping a lot to support our Defenders morally.”

Please tell others about this project.

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

Maybe you want to organize a postcard-writing bee?

Check our website for tips, [*How to Organize a Postcard-Writing Workshop*](#).

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



Need cards? Write to us at postcardstothefront.canada@gmail.com, and we'll send you postcards to write to Defenders. FREE!

If you have some written cards ready for us to ship to Ukraine, here's our address:

Postcards to the Front
P. O. Box 184
Millbrook, ON L0A 1G0 Canada



Postcard Design Competition

You do art? You've got an idea that you think would make a great postcard for Defenders? Here's your chance to communicate creatively with Ukraine's Defenders!

We've launched a *postcard design competition*. Anyone can enter from anywhere around the world. Any age.

Here's what we're looking for:

- Design must fit standard postcard size.
- Design must be your original work. No stealing. No AI.
- Design must be no older than three years old; that is, it must be evident that it was created after the February 2022 full-scale invasion.
- Design context and tone must be clearly Ukraine supportive.
- Design must be able to *make a Ukrainian Defender smile*. Think: cheerful, colourful, humorous, ironic, pinup-style, vintage-style, military-style. It's up to you.
- Any art form is welcome.
- Minimal text. Text will be printed in both English and Ukrainian. It must be easily translatable into Ukrainian.
- If you use a quote, tell us who wrote it / said it and, if possible, when (year).
- Colour or black-and-white.

Categories

- Adult – 19 and older
- Youth – 12-18 years old
- Child – up to 11 years old

1 winner in each category will have their design printed on a postcard for writing to Defenders.

Prizes

- Adult – 25 of their winning card
- Youth – 25 of their winning card
- Child – 25 of their winning card

Deadline

- Monday, February 24, 2025

Questions? Where to submit?

- Email: postcardstothefront.canada@gmail.com



Got a story to tell? Some photos to share?

Your stories matter, too. Do you have one that you'd like to share? Maybe you have some photos of a group postcard-writing effort? Please share. You will inspire others. Be in touch with us at: postcardstothefront.canada@gmail.com



Valentine's Day – Celebrate Pets

Mr. Cat's on the lookout!

We read a lot of postcard messages written to Defenders that share about family pets. Mischief they get into. Fun that children have with them. The love a writer feels for a beloved pet.

So, ... let's share some of that love with our readers, including Defenders.

You are invited to send us your favourite photo of your cat or dog or cockatiel or iguana or ... whatever pet, that shows their support for Ukraine. A photo that will make a Defender smile.

Send by February 13th. We'll share the best images in our February newsletter and on our website.

Email: postcardstothefront.canada@gmail.com



Figure 2: Mr. Cat's on the lookout!

Canada Branch Celebration

This month, Canada branch sent nearly 700 cards to Defenders. It looks like we're on track to achieve the milestone of 5,000 cards sent to Ukraine from Canada branch, thanks to the generous supportive efforts of many postcard warriors!

So, LET'S CELEBRATE!

The 5,000th card to arrive in our mailbox from anywhere in the world will receive a package of postcards! Three to write to Defenders (*please*), and two to do with as you wish!

Hoorah! Cards overwhelm home base mailbox



Tamara's mailbox in Ukraine has overflowed again this month. These packages arrived just in the first week!



See how she organizes them? All the Australia batches lined up, ready to open.



Ooooh-la-la! Some Tasmanian playing cards!



And LOOK! There's Charlie! Peter's faithful companion and *Postcards to the Front* canine warrior – on a postage stamp!



Next up, Canada branch batches. We sure hope those lovely stamps help fill the envelope for Irena to send to the Bone Cancer Research Trust (see [p. 21](#)).



Good thing so many cards made the journey to home base – just in time for the New Year! Mr. Cat has been busy taking requests for hundreds and thousands of postcards from brigades.

Cards in. Cards out. Job well done everyone! High Five!



Let's write some Ukrainian!

Well, it's three years now since the full-scale invasion. Imagine how tired Ukraine's Defenders are. They could sure use your words of care and support.

We encourage you to try one, or a couple, of the below Ukrainian phrases on your cards. After all, what better way to express your solidarity with Ukraine by trying to write in Ukrainian?

And don't worry if you don't get it perfect. We are told that your effort and thoughtfulness reach their hearts, and even make Defenders smile! And you will feel good, too, for trying.

We are also told that a splash of colour and messages from children are especially heartwarming.

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.

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

You defend your country and the
democracy. Ви захищаєте свою країну і демократію.

Thank you!	Дякую!
We are proud of you!	Ми пишаємося вами!
Bless Ukraine.	Благослови Україну.
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.
What you do is incredible	те, що ви робите, неймовірно
Be strong and stay safe.	Будьте сильними та бережіть себе.
Stay till the end! (meaning to 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.
I wish you a victory.	Бажаю вам перемоги.
Bless Ukraine.	Благослови Україну.
With love, (at the end of the letter)	З любов'ю,



Support Campaign

With the third anniversary since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine upon us, it's a good time to remind our elected representatives to maintain their support of Ukraine.

You can call your political representatives. Or, you can do what you are already doing well: write. Most have a contact form on their website. Or, you can write a letter.

Not sure what to write? Try a clear, direct and brief approach explaining why you support Ukraine, and why your representative should support Ukraine.

In **Canada**, find your MP by postal code here: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/members/en>

MPs email addresses are Firstname.Lastname@parl.gc.ca

In **Australia**, find your MP here:

https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Members

In the **United States**, find your representative here:

<https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>

Here's a sample letter to help you get started –

Sample email, or phone message –

Dear [NAME OF YOUR REPRESENTATIVE]

As your constituent, I urge you to stand with Ukraine, as I do through such actions as [describe how you support Ukraine].

Since the full-scale invasion by Russia, and even going back as far as 2014, the Ukrainian people have courageously defended their country, and freedom in Europe.

We need to stay united and strongly support Ukraine.

As your constituent, I urge you to stand with Ukraine. You can do this by making a political statement on or around February 24th, the anniversary date of the full-scale invasion.

You can also show your support by attending a *support Ukraine* event in our community.

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

[YOUR SIGNATURE]



Recent Mail Joy for Defenders



First, some beautiful bird cards written by students at the *Ivan Franko Ukrainian School*, Oshawa, Ontario. Postcard designs created by students at *Diana Nadia Lawryshyn Studio*, also located in Oshawa.



We wrote about these bird designs in our [October newsletter](#).

Next, some cards from The Netherlands – two envelopes from Johanna (not her first effort!) and one from newcomers to this project, Diny and Ellen.



And finally, some unexpected sparkle and cheer from another newcomer to this project, Kizzy in Trinidad and Tobago, who told us "Postcrossing and snail mail had helped me through very dark times as well and given me renewed hope in the goodness of mankind."

Kizzy had reached out to the [Postcrossing](#) community with a request for some good cheer for her mother. One of the people who responded is our dear friend, Anne, in Australia, who has connected us to other supporters. Anne "sent such a beautiful mail to my mother filled with goodies and she was so awesome to not ask for anything in return but instead refer me to your awesome initiative."



Day of Unity in Ukraine

January 22nd is Day of Unity in Ukraine. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy delivered a statement in front of St. Sophia Square in Kyiv –

"Millions of us are together. And together we were able to withstand, to keep Ukraine together, to repel the occupier, to hold back this great invasion together. This word



Figure 3: Source - @uapostcards (IG).

“together” hides the strength of Ukrainians. It's about us, about what we are capable of when we choose not our own ambitions, but choose Ukraine. We choose its interests. ... Every year on this day we have always recalled these lessons of unity, we have made human chains, we have said how important it is to preserve unity and stand side by side. But the day came and we had to prove it. February 24. The day that became a decisive moment. It became a challenge. A test of unity, of maturity, of faith in Ukraine. And we united. All Ukrainians united. Not declaratively, not on paper, not by some team, but by a call from within.”

As we share with you the *Day of Unity* image from @uapostcards Instagram post, we decided to revisit an article we wrote in November 2023 about UAPostcards – revised.

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You think you can only *send* postcards to Defenders?

Maybe you'd like to *receive* a postcard from a Defender?

[UA Postcards](#) is a group of volunteers with a goal to get what Ukraine's Defenders need. Vital supplies like tourniquets, first-aid kits, or bulletproof vests. Helmets. Drones and even vehicles. This tiny organization donates ALL profits for the purchase of non-lethal supplies for frontline Defenders.

I've had a life-long love for postcarding and wanted to add to my efforts to support Ukraine. So, I decided to purchase a card, written to me by a UA Postcards volunteer, “Every life is a whole universe”.

The online process was simple and the card arrived in reasonable time (given the war), and in great shape. No bullet holes through the middle. The handwritten message was personal and meaningful to me.

When I mail a postcard from Canada to Ukraine, the cost, including postcard and postage, averages about \$5.00 (Cdn). For a \$10.00 donation, I received a card from a Defender knowing that my donation goes directly to much-needed supplies.

And, I have to be frank.

Who can resist the cheeky invitation from UA Postcards to buy cards written by Defenders? Here's what their website says –

### **What can your postcard buy?**

A simple piece of paper can transform into a bunch of cool and useful things. And most importantly, you can do it at any time from anywhere in the world.

#### **HELMETS**

Unlike Russian soldiers, Ukrainians have brains that need to be protected.

#### **BULLETPROOF VESTS**

Ukraine fighters don't like getting shot since it distracts them from defending our homeland.

#### **TACTICAL MEDICINE**

Ukraine has great fighters, but unfortunately not always equipped with first aid kits.

#### **DRONES**

To save more lives during the fight we need to use more drones and robots.

#### **CLOTHING**

Russian soldiers surrender in order to get a better look at the beautiful uniform of our soldiers.

#### **VEHICLES**

A pickup truck is not an armored car but it's cheap and easy to buy. It's used on the battlefield to evacuate wounded soldiers and deliver supplies.

And, there's more!

You can purchase cards to be sent to Defenders by the UA Postcards volunteers.

You can also purchase powerful postcards with Ukrainian themes, to be sent to Russian embassies, all over the world. These messages remind Russia that the world is watching, and that we support Ukraine.



Figure 4: Source: [UA Postcards](#).

A small postcard can have an impact.

It can save lives. Really!

Take a look at [UA Postcards](#) website.

Maybe buy a postcard written to you, or [one written to someone you know](#). Maybe you like *Pushka, the Cat*, or want to send someone *Birthday Wishes for Freedom*.

Or, have one written to a [Defender or to a Russian Embassy](#). There are many.

All options, and postcards, are excellent choices for a creative way to communicate your support for Ukraine. Like this one, “... Do what you have to do.”



## These Hands

Darka, one of our supporters, shared the below poem and images with us.

We are reminded that the hands that defend are also happy to hold a postcard message of support and care.



Figure 5: Photo credit - Frontliner.

© DonbasFrontliner  
Andriy.Dubchak

### Look at these hands....

These hands that do not know the holy  
day of Christmas,  
That their life is one of miracles.  
Those hands that don't see mom,  
Her prayer is a faithful charm.  
These hands that do not know fatigue,  
It's like the Titans are in a fierce battle.  
These hands that can't  
Be with relatives, in your family.  
These hands that used to write,  
And painted happiness in colors.  
These hands that used to love  
So true and gentle ...  
Before the war...

– Natalie W. Shepelyaeva

### Споглянь народе, на ці руки....

Ці руки, що не знають свята,  
А їх життя-одне з чудес.  
Ці руки, що не бачать мами,  
Її молитва-вірний амулет.  
Ці руки, що не знають втоми,  
Й немов Титани у запеклий бій.  
Ці руки, що не мають змоги  
Побути з рідними, в своїй сім'ї.  
Ці руки, що колись писали,  
І фарбували щастя в кольори.  
Ці руки, що колись кохали  
Так вірно й ніжно...  
До війни...

– Наталі Ш. Шепеляєва



### More cards arrive at the front lines



Figure 6: Image from IG @kristinanenno.



More postcards arrive at the front lines, these happy chaps showing off some cards from Canada. We hope our dear friend Marcus can recognize his card – left photo, middle guy, giving his Slava Ukraini salute! Слава Україні!

**Along with supplies, your postcard 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!**

**Let us know if you need some FREE cards to write to Defenders. Please encourage others to join in this project to boost morale at the front lines.**

postcardstothefront.canada@gmail.com



Your cards do make a difference,  
as Danylo tells us from the front lines –



***Nothing warms the soldiers' heart as a handwritten letter.***

— Defender Danylo

And, as Irena told us this month –



***Your efforts, postcards and participation are valuable and visible for all Ukrainians, and the project, Postcards to the Front, is helping a lot to support our Defenders morally.***

— Irena

***Thank you for your continued support of Defenders of Ukraine!***



# Writing postcards to Defenders is a sad joy

By Helen

We keep bumping into the good deeds of Anne – [Postcrossing](#) ID *Queen of the Hounds* – who recommends this project to other Postcrossers.



Figure 7: Renee Lukas in Chicago.

For example, Renee who lives in Chicago, Illinois. After learning about *Postcards to the Front* from Anne, she started to send some fabulous cards to Defenders. Including a lot of cute dog cards!

Renee's kind heart sparkles through her messages. She explained that "writing postcards to the Defenders of Ukraine is a sad joy. Sad that their country is still at war. A joy to be able to touch a soldier with encouraging words and a picture postcard. It breaks my heart that this beautiful country is fighting for its very existence."

As a Postcrosser, Renee has "lots of practice in writing postcards to people all around the globe, but it is a different mindset to conjure up words of support for a soldier on the front lines in Ukraine; one who is separated from family and loved ones and who faces danger on a daily basis."

To help her get started, Renee turned to our [Tips and Samples](#) page on our website, as well as tried some of the [Ukrainian phrases](#) that we provide; though, she admitted, "my Cyrillic script is shaky and totally amateurish, [but] I try my best to uplift and provide a measure of comfort with my words."

We have learned from many of our postcard warriors that it can be a challenge to start that first sentence to a Defender. But once started, as Renee shared, "it's a huge privilege to touch another human's heart, especially one who is fighting for their very existence. I consider this project a labor of love."

Before she found *Postcards to the Front*, Renee already supported Ukraine. For instance, she makes donations to various efforts to support Ukraine. She also believes that it's important to exercise her franchise by "voting for public officials who hold pro-democracy and anti-authoritarianism values and [to support] leaders who value humanity, civil rights and egalitarianism."

Now that she knows about *Postcards to the Front*, Renee has added a note to her Postcrossing profile to encourage others to go to our [website](#). She also shares about "this worthwhile effort with friends, family and acquaintances. I let them know that if they do not have postcards, my vast collection is at their disposal."



Figure 8: Renee's dog postcards to the Defenders.

In other words, Renee does what she can, in the United States, to support what Ukraine's Defenders are doing in Ukraine, all to uphold and maintain democracy. One way in which people from different parts of the world support each other for common objectives.

When thinking about the cards that she sends to Defenders, Renee "likes to imagine that a Defender feels uplifted on receiving a postcard written by a human in faraway Chicago. I want the Defender to know that they are not alone – many people care and want their courageous effort to prevail. Truly, it brings tears to my eyes to imagine someone reading these postcards and smiling and, perhaps, feeling a bit stronger."

There are many amazing people, such as Renee, all over the world who are dismayed by the invasion of Ukraine, and who want to do something concrete and meaningful to show their support for Ukraine. What we do at *Postcards to the Front* is ensure that Defenders receive messages of support with words of kindness and care that remind them that they are not forgotten. We stand with them.

Finally, it's quite touching that Renee also is "thankful that this project exists and that good people like Anne in Australia, and Helen and Jean-Michel in Canada, are doing the work of angels."

Thank you, Renee, for all your kind words and for all that *you* do!

# Each postcard is a small piece of hope for a peaceful tomorrow

By Irena (Kyiv)

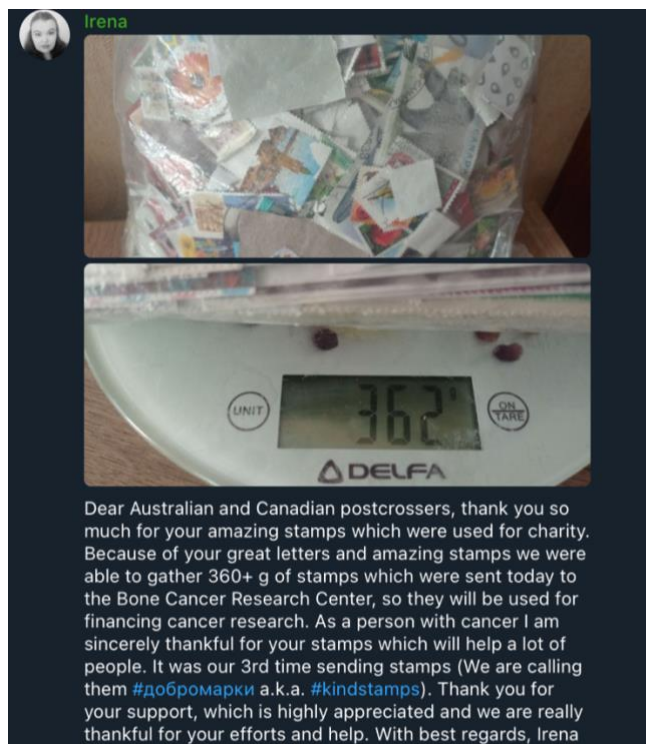


Figure 9: Irena's post on social media.

*[Editor's note]*

*Recently, Tamara at home base in Ukraine shared an image of a social media post by Irena thanking Australian and Canadian [Postcrossers](#) for their used stamps.*

*Irena was happy to announce that she had amassed from Postcrosser contributions 360grams of stamps for the [Bone Cancer Research Trust](#). Of course, I wanted to know more, so reached out to Irena, who agreed to share with us her story about living with cancer in a war zone. Here's her story; a letter to you, dear reader –*

When the full-scale war started on February 22, 2024, I was sleeping after a long working day. I was living in our capital city, Kyiv, on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor in a rented apartment near Boryspil Airport.

We heard lots of explosions, and thinking it was not safe, I moved back with my mom and younger sister living in a relatively safer district in Kyiv. However, it is located near a strategically important bridge and a train station, so when the Russians were close to Kyiv, our district was isolated. This made it impossible to leave due to checkpoints. This isolation lasted for several weeks (all March and April 2022), because there were several bombing attempts there. It was hard to get food, especially for our dogs.

There are no men in our small family and we do not have a car. So, we were not able to evacuate during the early days. However, I understood that I needed to help my mom and

my sister to get to a safer place. On April 6, 2022 I was able to organize evacuation for my mom, sister, cousin, our two dogs and me. I brought them to Croatia because I knew a Croatian and was able to find a place for all of us, including the dogs, and because I was able to afford it.

My mom and cousin lived there with the dogs, while I worked for my company in different countries for the next two years: Poland, Uzbekistan, Poland again, Ethiopia.

Meanwhile, I organized my sister's move to Canada. She received a scholarship in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, where she still lives.

When I got sick with cancer in October 2023 my company kicked me out, so I was not able to stay in Europe with my family and dogs anymore. We returned home to live in Kyiv.

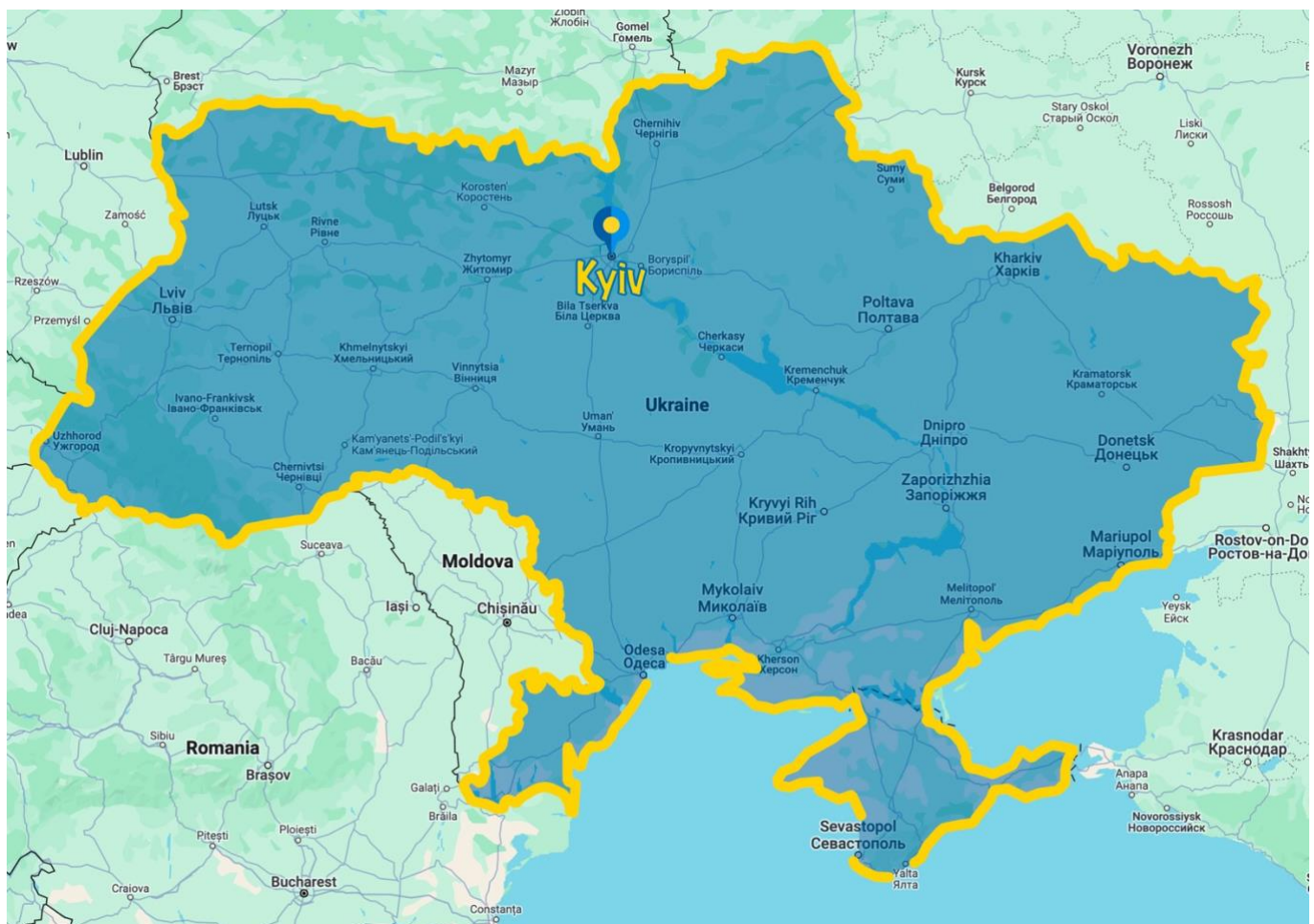


Figure 10: Map of Ukraine.

At first, I felt pretty much useless, because I was always tired, sleepy, nauseous, but I wanted to contribute somehow to the community as I had done when I was healthy. Then, I regularly donated blood and volunteered at different sport events. I missed it.

Last May, I got involved with the Ukrainian [Postcrossers](#) community, and by the beginning of June I was happy to find out that Tamara, *Postcards to the Front* founder, planned to host a Postcrossover meet-up in Ivano-Frankivsk. I was thrilled to join the meetup; it was my first journey somewhere after getting my cancer diagnosis.

Approximately a week before the meetup, I found a great article on the Postcrossing blog about the [Bone Cancer Research Trust](#) (BCRT) that collects used stamps to raise funds for bone cancer research.

I decided to tell Tamara about this project; to ask participants of the meetup to bring their used stamps to the meeting, which she gladly accepted. A lot of the meetup participants brought their stamps resulting in our first joint envelope, full of stamps, which we sent to the bone cancer initiative.

My main inspiration was to do something useful for society. Also, I was sad that a lot of stamps were thrown away, so this project helped us to contribute to such important research.

The Bone Cancer Research Trust (BCRT) has been around since 2014. At first, only people from Great Britain were involved, then it spread across Europe, and now has outreach all over the world.

***My main inspiration was to do something useful for society.***

There are a lot of stamp collectors who are willing to buy stamps from different [especially] rare countries, as well as old stamps, and they pay a lot of money for unique and rare stamps. The BCRT gets stamps from all the donators (used, not used), then sells them by weight (up to 20 pounds per kg of stamps). Stamps that are identified as ‘valuable’ and ‘rare’ are sold at auctions.

All proceeds from stamp sales go to fund their initiatives. For example, to fund research of different experimental bone cancer medicine, to promote bone cancer awareness, and to fund important medicine for patients with bone cancer. Stamp collection is only one

project among dozens of others: you can help while volunteering, baking, running or organizing a marathon...

Stamps made sense to me because my grandfather used to be a stamp collector. He taught me how to cut them out and how to unstick stamps by wetting, so they are still valuable. I am not a stamp collector because I have a huge postcard collection, as well as a coin collection. My home cannot handle any more collections! But maybe in the future, when I have enough space, I will start my own collection.

However, I like beautiful stamps from different countries. Over the past six months, we've organized three stamp collections during which I learned a lot about stamps from different countries. We are now even able to separate more valuable stamps from regular stamps, to help BCRT with sorting them.

I am a proud Postcrosser. I joined on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012, but then had a long-term pause due to the high price of sending postcards abroad. During 2022 I had a huge lack of positive emotion and I had started sending postcards again. It was the best decision for me because you receive a huge support from the Ukrainian community and especially from communities abroad. I have received hundreds of positive and supportive emails and postcards from all over the world: Germany, Canada, USA, Australia, Poland... And it helps a lot, because you understand that the world knows about Ukraine, thinks about people here and that others sympathize with us.

***I have received hundreds of positive and supportive emails and postcards from all over the world ...***

Naturally, my first source of stamps for BCRT was through Postcrossing. I kindly ask Postcrossers to send me postcards in an envelope, if possible, and to include used stamps if they do not need them. A lot of Postcrossers from different countries started to contribute this way.

Then, I went through my huge collection of postcards (which was started back in 2012). Between 2012 and 2014, I had received a lot of postcards from Russia. They don't bring me any joy anymore, so I cut them all, taking the stamps from them for BCRT.

Then, as mentioned earlier, I attended Tamara's Postcrossing meetup. I made a small report to our group about the BCRT initiative, including stamps sent. After reading the



Figure 11: Irena collecting used stamps for bone cancer

information I shared, a lot of Ukrainian Postcrossers decided to contribute as well. The first package of stamps sent last June was almost 180 grams. Then, in September I sent 300 grams. Our last one was 362 grams, so we are gaining more and more.

The biggest contribution so far has been from Tamara and participants of the project *Postcards to the Front*, receiving stamps from all over the world. So, it is possible to say that our most valuable source of stamps is the generosity of Tamara's heart: her meetup, her friends abroad, the organization she founded, *Postcards to the Front*. Implementing this idea in life was not possible without Tamara's support, because I did not know anyone in the community. She has been so supportive and helpful that I am inspired to continue with the BCRT stamp project as long as needed.

Meanwhile, back in 2014 my sister was still in school and she and her classmates were writing letters to the front (that year was the first phase of Russia's invasion). They sent paintings, and so I know how it is important to support our soldiers.

Then, I learned about *Postcards to the Front* from Tamara at the meetup that she hosted. We were given the chance to write postcard(s) to the front, and it was a pleasure to see how participants were willing to participate. Tamara also promotes *Postcards to the Front* on the chat page of Ukrainian Postcrossers. It inspires to see how people are sending packs of postcards to our Defenders filled with warm words and supportive messages.

So far, I have participated twice in the *Postcards to the Front* project. The first small package with postcards written by me and my mom was sent to Tamara in November (for our Defenders for Christmas). I also held an activity in my Oncology Department in the hospital, bringing a lot of postcards from home so other patients could write postcards for

our soldiers, while undergoing chemo treatments. My hope is that every card will brighten someone's day.

I am now planning my third *Postcards to the Front* activity for my next chemo treatment, so more people at the hospital can participate as well.

*Interesting fact:* my sister in Saskatoon learned about the *Postcards to the Front* project before me from her friends, a Canadian couple who promote the project with writing events at the local church community.

I truly admire the people who have organized this project, promoting it and working hard to inspire others to write postcards because it is incredibly important to support our Defenders on the front line. A lot of them have been fighting since 2014. They sacrifice their lives, blood, time, mental health to fight for our freedom, independence and future.

I have friends who have received postcards and letters during these last few years, and they are touched by this project. I was visiting my friend Andriy in the hospital who had lost his leg near Bakhmut. Defenders usually are not open to talking about the hell on the front line, so we were trying to talk about something else, and I asked him whether he had received any letters or postcards. It was the first time his face brightened!

Andriy told me that they received a lot of postcards at the front lines and then exchanged them to read more words of support. One letter he kept for himself. It was a letter from a small girl, with her hand drawn on the back side of the letter. The words were filled with mistakes, the letters were messy, so he assumed that she was pretty young. The message on the letter was short as well: "Dear Hero, thank you for protecting me". Short. But a very powerful message.

***[I]t is incredibly important to support our Defenders on the front line ... They sacrifice their lives, blood, time, mental health to fight for our freedom, independence and future.***

Such letters and postcards are sometimes more valuable on the front line than anything else. War is not easy, especially when it is cold, snowy and when you are getting a lot of bad news from politicians. So, in my opinion, it is a great gesture of support for our

Defenders when they receive postcards and messages not only from Ukrainians, but *especially* from people in another part of the world.

I want to tell everyone who writes messages to our Defenders through *Postcards to the Front* that I am grateful! You are sending thousands of postcards to our Defenders. And, you are doing another important impact on the world as well, through the stamps that we collect for BCRT. Your efforts, postcards and participation are valuable and visible for all Ukrainians, and the project, *Postcards to the Front*, is helping a lot to support our Defenders morally.

I will not sugarcoat the truth here. It is hard for Ukrainians in general because of the war, and it is really hard to get important medical care and treatment during the war for someone with a serious illness.

I believe that readers already know this, but Russians are bombing hospitals a lot. I am a stage 3 cancer patient and had my first major surgery in Kyiv in February 2023. It was a horrifying experience, because it was impossible to postpone the surgery, as it was needed to be done asap. The day of my surgery there were a lot of drones attacking Kyiv. My last memory that day is when I got my inhalation of anesthesia, laying on the operating table, and I had heard the signal of the air-raid siren...

Luckily, that day my hospital was not bombed, but during this time (since October 2023), I have spent a lot of time in different hospitals in Kyiv, and several times they were attacked.

So, we often spend our chemo sessions in the bomb shelter.

However, after major surgeries, people are not able to move, so they stay in their beds and pray. It is an ironic joke between cancer patients that we have higher chance to die from a Russian attack on the hospital than from cancer.

***[W]e have higher chance to die from a Russian attack on the hospital than from cancer.***

For now, I cannot contribute to society as much as I want, but I am thankful for our doctors and hospitals who are here for us, who fight for us every day. I am thinking that after the war, and if my illness allows, I will start a project similar to *Postcards to the Front*, but for Ukrainian cancer patients.

I know that a lot of people with serious illnesses (as well as a lot of our Defenders with very serious injuries) were saved due to medical evacuation with a lot of countries taking in and treating Ukrainians during the last couple of years. Unfortunately, this is not working anymore the way it used to. Partner countries are tired. They had taken care of hundreds of Ukrainians, so, for example, cancer patients are not eligible for such care out-of-country, even if their medicine is not produced here anymore because of war.

But, I am happy that our Defenders are still able to use this opportunity to go elsewhere for medical care, because they deserve it, sacrifice their health and lives, and they need a proper treatment.

A lot of European and American cancer medical products which are needed on a daily basis for thousands of Ukrainian cancer patients are not available because “it is too dangerous to send them to Ukraine”.

But, is it not dangerous for people to die without the medicine?

It is a pretty painful topic for me, to be honest, because now I am losing as many friends due to cancer as well as on the front line. So, I am always wondering: which weapons are holding innocent sick people in Ukrainian hospitals, like Okhmadyt or maternity hospitals? And how is it possible that such horror is happening in the middle of Europe?

I am not a doctor and cannot cure illnesses. I am always tired and my hands are not working properly due to chemo side effects, but I want to help and contribute while I am still here and able to do it.

So that is why stamps - a small thing – but I hope that the stamps will have a positive impact on bone cancer research so people with this type of cancer will be able to live healthy and happy [and longer] lives. This is my second biggest dream. My first big dream is Ukrainian victory in this war.

All types of stamps are valued and needed: old, unused old, Russian, Soviet, standard ones any stamps! You can cut them off your envelopes and postcards (if you do not need them and want to contribute) and I will do the rest. Please send them here:

**Iryna Markova**

106 Apartment 7  
Entuziastiv Street  
Kyiv 02154  
Ukraine

I make regular reports about the results of our project, so readers of *Postcards to the Front* will be able to know how their contributions help. Just let me know on your envelope that you are sending your stamps as a *Postcards to the Front* supporter.

I believe that readers who are writing messages to Ukraine's Defenders are people with a huge heart, because only kind and warm-hearted people can find time, inspiration and the right words for our Defenders – for a lot of months in a row. I know for many of you it's been since the full-scale invasion in 2022. Thank you!

Thanks to all of you all who participate in *Postcards to the Front*, who spread the word about the project, involving relatives, friends, colleagues. When war lasts for such a long time it is greatly needed that others continue to support soldiers who are fighting not only for Ukraine, but also for a civilized world and peace.

I am hearing it a lot lately that "Ukrainians should stop fighting, Putin will colonize them and will leave us in peace." Please keep in mind that peace will not happen. Next will be war in Estonia, Poland, Latvia or Lithuania, Moldova or any other country. Nobody is safe, because it is pure evil.

Your postcards support Defenders of our common future. Each postcard is a small piece of hope for a peaceful tomorrow.

Please ... do not stop supporting Defenders.

Please ... do not forget about Ukraine.

I believe our biggest fear now is that we will be forgotten by the world.

I am happy to meet you!

Thank you for your project and for the huge supportive help for our soldiers.

Best wishes, Irena

# A little something heals

By Helen



Figure 12: Nancy's postcards to the Front.

Since the founding of *Postcards to the Front*, we've reached out several times to the [Postcrossing](#) community to invite members to write postcard messages of support to Ukraine's Defenders. After all, that's what Postcrossers do: send lovely postcards to random individuals all over the planet, forming connections, learning about each other.

From the Philadelphia area in the United States, Nancy is another Postcrosser who decided to write some postcards to Ukraine's Defenders, sending a number of batches to both Canada branch and home branch in Ukraine. She has tapped into our [tips page](#) on the *Postcards to the Front* website and the [Ukrainian Phrases](#) page.

About writing in Ukrainian, she explained, "I just cobbled together several of those [phrases] and wrote small variations on each card. I knew it wasn't about how brilliant or creative I could sound. It was about the individual soldier, making him/her feel that they mattered and that the world appreciated their sacrifice. And it was a fun challenge to write them in the Cyrillic alphabet!"

Nancy's motivation for sending postcards to Ukraine's Defenders begins with her view that "not only is it a terrible wrong for one nation to invade/kidnap/bomb another country without provocation; Russian ambitions threaten many other nations as well. Ukraine is absorbing Russia's colonizing ambitions for now. If they fall, anywhere in Eastern Europe or the Middle East may be next."

She compassionately adds that "resisting Russia depends on the people doing the resisting. War is a grueling, frustrating, terrifying experience, and these people have given up being at home with their loved ones to do it. So, if we can offer them something – hope,

acknowledgement of that sacrifice – hopefully that helps keep them doing their absolute best with this very tough job in front of them.”

There’s more to Nancy’s motivation. As she explains it, her cards are making a unique journey that spans across time, place, and several generations. It’s a complicated journey, reminding us that the past often collides with the present. Sometimes, in terrible ways. Other times, we learn from it; maybe, even can heal.

As Nancy explains –



*Both my grandmothers were from Ukraine. Both my grandfathers were from Russia. But none of them were considered Ukrainian or Russian even though their families had lived there for hundreds of years. They were Jewish by religion and neither of those countries gave them the respect nor consideration offered to Christians.*

*My grandparents fled those regions where they experienced heavy discrimination and state-sanctioned violence (assaults, rape, murder of family members) for the crime of being Jewish. And when I say they fled, these were perilous journeys, requiring tactics such as hiding underneath haystacks and enduring getting stabbed with pitchforks to get past the border guards, having to pay bribes to officials, being thrown off trains because they were Jewish. They weren’t wanted, but they also weren’t supposed to escape. Sadly, our relatives who stayed because the journey seemed too perilous, were murdered under the Nazis – not by the Germans, but by eager Ukrainian collaborators.*

*And so, when Russia invaded Ukraine back in 2014, I wasn’t too concerned. I could hear my grandfather’s voice in my head saying, “Let the gonifs (thieves) kill each other off!”*

*But with the invasion of 2022, I began to feel differently. By then Ukraine had elected a Jew to be their President, and they seemed to love and respect him. That was a sign of a better society, right? And it was clear that Putin was emboldened when there was little international resistance to his first invasion. The domino theory was discounted long ago, but it seemed valid here – if we didn't stop Putin, he was going to keep taking bites out of countries who'd escaped from the Soviet Union. Bullies keep bullying until someone stands up to them. That's what happened with Hitler, and by the time the Allies pulled together to fight him off, it was ever so much harder to contain him. So, I changed my mind. I became an advocate for Ukraine. I would reach out to help those grandchildren of the gonifs. Apologies to my grandparents, but ... the world has changed in the decades since you passed away.*

*Now, every time I write a note in sympathy to Ukraine, a little something heals inside me – some bit of old anger, fear or resentment. I am more at peace with how I regard Ukraine and Ukrainians, and Postcards to the Front has played a part.*

*Let warfare also be a time for healing, when and where it can. I thank you, my friends, for that.*

This project is about love and hope. When we reach out to others – to strangers far, far away – with compassion and care, across continents and across time and through the generations, we can nourish a healing process.

It's Nancy's hope that her cards will help Defenders "feel noticed and acknowledged. Like, 'Gosh, somebody in America heard about me and thinks I'm a hero??!?' and the next day it is a bit easier to crawl out of their sleeping bag, reload their weapon, and risk their life again.

Like most people we meet through this project, Nancy has found other ways to support Ukraine. For instance, she donates money that is targeted directly to Ukraine through the [Ukrainian Red Cross](#) for shelters and medical care, and to [World Central Kitchen](#) to help feed people in need in Ukraine.

She also encourages others to send postcard messages of support to Ukraine's Defenders. After all, Ukraine's Defenders could really use our support and encouragement after a hard day at the front lines. For three years since the full-scale invasion.