July 2025

ostcards to the Front

Ukraine Australia Canada

International Newsletter





Volume 2 Issue 12

A Month in Postcards

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This month our postcard warriors from Australia sent 882 cards and from Canada sent 1,478 cards. Australia's total sent is now 21,546 cards and Canada's is now 10,136.

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

In this Issue

| | ٠.۷ |
|--|------|
| Introducing Australia branch's social media manager, Kerry | |
| Tamara goes to Berlin By Tamara | .8 |
| Defenders are often 'just' citizens who need our support | 13 |
| News and Updates | 15 |
| In memory of Irena | |
| Christmas in Summer | |
| You're invited to another contest! | . 18 |
| Museum | |
| | |
| Tridents & Tanks – Oshawa, Ontario | |

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—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.

Editor: Helen Layout editor: Linda



Introducing Australia branch's social media manager, Kerry

By Helen





This month, we welcome Kerry to her new role as social media guru for Australia branch!

Originally from the United Kingdom, Kerry is now a busy Australia high school teacher of textiles/fashion.

And she's not 'new' to *Postcards to the Front*, having been introduced to the project in 2023 when she attended the annual *Mama's Market*, run by *Ukrainians in Geelong* (Victoria).

"I saw the postcard activity, so me and my daughter each wrote a card of support (her great-grandfather was Ukrainian). I thought it was such a wonderful idea, that I immediately took the idea back to my school and delivered the activity to my students at lunchtimes in September 2023."

Skip forward to 2025 and a visit to *Mama's Market* again, where Kerry's students and her small brand *Pelican*, created and donated scrunchies, bracelets and earrings to sell at the market, as a fundraiser for Ukraine.

Again, Kerry and her daughter "wrote postcards at the wonderful *Postcards to the Front* table, and I decided it was time to run the activity again at my school."

"We managed to create 110 cards by year 7 and 8 students, where some even tried writing in Ukrainian. Another 10 cards were written by my daughter and her friends."

We know, at *Postcards to the Front*, that cards written by children and youth are especially heartwarming because they reconnect Defenders with young family members whom many haven't seen for one or two or more years.

When asked what inspires Kerry to be involved with *Postcards to the Front*, she explained, "with the invasion of Ukraine I, like most people, felt powerless to help, other than monetary donations, which for some people is not an option. This activity is such a great way to show support whilst sending a heartlet message to those defending their freedom."

What began in 2023 as a postcard warrior, Kerry "quickly became an educator/workshop facilitator for the project at my school. Every anniversary of the war, I showed a slide show to my students about what has happened over the year to make sure that they don't forget Ukraine. Sadly, many of my students still ask to this day 'Is the war still going on?' so I feel it is so important to keep Ukraine in their thoughts."

Recently, Kerry decided to increase her involvement with the project, so approached Peter, Ambassador to *Postcards to the Front Australia*, "with an offer to create an <u>Instagram account</u> for the project. I was delighted when he accepted. So I am now the social media manager (I still find that funny) for PTTFA and have also created a new <u>Facebook page</u>."

There are a few reasons that Kerry thinks the project to send messages of support to Ukraine's Defenders is worthwhile; notably, how she feels after "seeing the photos of Defenders proudly holding cards and hearing their joy at reading a card, knowing that a total stranger cares about them and that they have not been forgotten. How could you not think it worthwhile?"

Kerry is also in regular contact with a frontline Defender to whom she "often sends translated messages from the cards written by my students. They are most grateful."

Kerry felt somewhat intimidated when staring down her first cards. But, she shared, "there were suggestions of what to write at the postcards table, which were very helpful. Now I just write from the heart. And my students have really amazed me with their compassion through their words. A few messages really made me cry, because of their genuine warmth and love for a total stranger."

She accessed the <u>Australian branch website</u> for ideas to help her get started, also to help her students get started.

And this year, Kerry started to develop "some of my own ideas of useful phrases, translating English into Ukrainian so that I could practice my Ukrainian which I am learning at a snail's pace! I was proud of my students when they also took up the challenge of writing in Ukrainian, so well worth giving them the option!"

"At the start of the invasion in February 2022," Kerry recalled, "my school flew the Ukrainian flag and I organised lunchtime activities to create items like heart flag keyrings,



pin badges, and sunflower brooches to sell with my students to help raise money for Ukraine."

Her students also participated in the *Quilt for Ukraine* project with https://www.instagram.com/jannoart/.

"We each created a 30cm x 30cm block with Ukrainerelated artwork such as sunflowers, messages of support in Ukraine's flag colours, blue/yellow. Once completed, the blocks were sent off to the artist, who

then created a huge quilt which travelled the globe on the way to Ukraine. Its purpose is to wrap a war-torn building in love."

Kerry has regular contact with a Defender and sometimes posts their conversations on Instagram (with his permission). For example, this conversation that features a postcard written by a student at the school where she teaches.

"I translated it from English into Ukrainian using Google translate. The 3 x smiling faces were the reaction of a Defender currently serving in the Ukrainian Army that I am in regular contact with. This is a screenshot of our conversation, with his permission. I added the Ukraine stickers when posting to Instagram."

There's more in Kerry's support toolkit for Ukraine. When she's not teaching, she "makes sunflower scrunchies through my small brand Pelican3223, to sell at local markets, where all proceeds go to Ukrainian charities,



mainly <u>Voices of Children Ukraine</u> and <u>United24 – Sky Sentinel</u>, as well as others, as needed, such as the 78th Separate Airbourne Assault Regiment and Landscape Design Unit 'Geese' RVP 21st Separate Mechanised Brigade. All links can be found on my <u>Linktree.</u>"



Most recently, Kerry has undertaken an initiative "to raise awareness of the 19,546 Ukrainian children stolen by Russia. The aim is to create a quilt in the colours of the Ukrainian flag, where each block has an outline of a house and a blanket and a pillow. Every time a child is returned to Ukraine, a small doll is placed into the blanket to symbolise the return. The outline of the house is to echo the logo of Bring Kids Back Campaign (President Zelenskyy and his wife Olenka's initiative)."

Keenly aware that she cannot do the project alone, Kerry needs help to create 19,546 blocks, 19,546 dolls, 19,546 pillows and 19,546 blankets, ideally with traditional Ukrainian embroidery or cross stitch patterns.

If interested, reach out to Kerry via her <u>Linktree</u> for more information.

I imagine, for instance, a lot of quilters among members from branches of the <u>Federated Women's Institutes of Canada</u> who might be able to pitch in! If so, please share about your involvement with us!

Kerry also learns from others how they expand their support of Ukraine, beyond postcards. For instance, "I did hear of a very generous lady in Singapore who donates stamps to *Postcards the Front Australia* so that the postcards can continue on their journey to Ukraine."

Because of her regular contact with a front-line Defender, Kerry knows firsthand how grateful Defenders are for the messages that they receive from all over the world. "So, I imagine most, if not all, feel the same. A feeling that they haven't been forgotten, and encouragement to continue in the darkest days."

Recently Kerry learned that her Defender friend at the front lines was injured so sent along a digital message of support to him.

"He said that we were heroes, and I replied that I didn't think so as we are not in combat, but then he sent me this wonderful reply –

It doesn't matter how much training and experience we have unless we have the equipment and supplies to work with.

It doesn't matter how well prepared we are. We still sink into depression because of the constant human suffering, death, loss, and destruction around us.

It's only thanks to people like you that help to provide us what we need and to give us hope through your letters for our troops.

It shows to us that we are not alone and not forgotten.

You are just as vital in our fight for freedom as a soldier or a medic.

We are all part of the same chain. Everyone is needed to keep it strong and unbreakable.

That's why you are a hero for me and the people of Ukraine."

Kerry's final message to you, dear postcard warrior –

Your words really do make a difference – please write anything that comes from your heart. Even 'Thinking of you' could change a Defender's mood. If you're not good with words – add lots of stickers; or, if you have children, get them to draw a picture.

Tamara goes to Berlin

By Tamara

Editor: This month, Tamara made the arduous journey from Ukraine to Germany to attend a historic postcard convention at the <u>Museum für Kommunikation Berlin</u>. Here is her story:



Mihnea – my very good friend – owner of the biggest postcard store in the world, asked me to participate in his postcard conference planned for Berlin a year-and-a-half ago. He said it will be a conference celebrating 20 years of Postcrossing; a worldwide postcard exchange project that connects people around the planet.

Mihnea is a very big friend for my shop too. He gives me world famous series of FOTW (flags of the world) and MOTW (maps of the world) postcards to resell in my shop. *Mihnea, if you read this, thank you for that and of course for the continuous support of Ukraine.*

So, we planned to attend. But, of course, I was hoping that the war would be over by now that that I'd just fly to Berlin.

Meanwhile, I had to move to another city [to be safer] and, of course planes are not flying over Ukraine so I made the decision to drive to Berlin by car so I could carry all of my supplies: banner, luggage and postcards for the front. My mom agreed to help being a second driver.

Our trip started at 9am July 10th and ended at 5pm July 16th. Virtually, non-stop driving.

The plan was -

- July 10, Ivano-Frankivsk to Kraków (Poland)
- July 11, Krakow to Berlin
- July 12-13 Conference in Berlin
- July 14, Berlin to Prague (Czech Republic)
- July 15, Prague to Kosice b(Slovakia)
- July 16, Kosice to Ivano-Frankivsk



In the early afternoon of July 10, just 10 minutes before the border, my tire blew! I'm not sure how it got cut, but there we were, having to change a tire, so close to the border.

Fortunately, my mother is capable to do such things, so she changed it, then we had to find a service station to get the tire repaired. All this took a few hours, delaying our arrival at the border.

Back on the road around 3pm, we finally arrived at the border of Poland, where we waited and waited for around 5 hours (keep in mind that the time zone changed at this location, affecting our body clocks).

Getting across the border was quite challenging. I don't speak Polish and it was surprising that customs staff didn't speak English. I understand that the Polish side is not forced to speak Ukrainian, but I was not understanding all that they said in Polish.

The customs officer scratched my window sunscreen film during the full-car customs check in the car pit. They checked everything; even took out window gums and inspected every small bag. The biggest problem was that one customs official tried to say something to me 20 times in Polish but I didn't get what it was; I already was almost crying asking for English when she finally said "turn the lights off" in English. She then laughed a lot about it.

It's quite confusing, maybe they know English ... after all?

By the way ... my car's name is Vira, she needs some healing now.

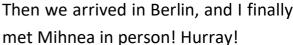


Eventually, we were released from customs, then arrived in Krakow around midnight. Thanks god we were able to find a place to eat; an amazing one near a train station which is open 24/7. We were hungry as we had not eaten since 8am and it was already around 1am Poland (2am Ukraine).

The next day we carried on to Berlin. It was raining so heavy that I was not able to see the car before me.

On the way, we picked up two girls who were hitchhiking. They wanted to go across the border with us, but we rejected to take them because I was scared of having difficulties at the German border; especially, for the additional questions. Maybe you don't know but on July 7th Germany made some new border rules between Poland and Germany to prevent migrants from crossing into Germany.





We spent the next day at the postcard conference selling cards. My mom helped sort money and cards.

Mihnea had estimated that I would sell 5,000 of my [own] postcards before noon on the first day. But, in two days, I sold only 1,800 postcards. Mihnea took all the leftovers, so I didn't have to transport the stock back to Ukraine. Thanks Mihnea!

I feel people liked my cards that I was selling for 0,5 euro.







I also took 50 cards for people to write to Defenders for *Postcards to the Front*. Only about 10 people agreed to sign them.

Overall, the postcard event was amazing, people attended meetups to sign postcards, some spending 8 hours the first day and 6 hours the next day ... signing cards and talking!

I am a bit jealous that I was not able to participate in the events as a Postcrosser myself. The organization was wonderful. And the location! Oh, what an amazing place! It was the Museum of Communication Berlin, and – literally – it was a postal museum. You can't find a better place at all for postcards. AT ALL.



At the end of the event, we packed up, then left Berlin to return home. First, to Prague, then to Kosice in Slovakia, and finally home to Ukraine. It took us only 20 minutes to cross the Slovak border.

And then ... It's an unbelievable feeling to be in our amazing beautiful Ukraine after 2500 km of driving.

Home.



Defenders are often 'just' citizens who need our support

By Helen

Since we launched *Postcards to the Front*, we have learned that there are a handful of shared reasons for writing postcard messages of support to Ukraine's Defenders. Among these is the obvious *David-and-Goliath* scenario. A bully beating on 'the little guy'.

There also are unique individual motivators. As is the case with Joke, from Utrecht, The Netherlands. A country that well knows the historic ravages of war.



Joke frankly told us: "When I heard of the project, at first I dismissed it because I've always been a pacifist, and demonstrated against cruise missiles in the 1980s. So how could I send messages to the front, to soldiers? But I realized that the people on the front in Ukraine are not only professional military, but often just citizens from Ukraine, and both are defending their country. I felt that supporting them was a small gesture when they risk their lives in a war that they never asked for."

Naturally, Joke imagines that it's "very difficult to keep your spirits up at the front."



And so, "A kind word on a postcard may help just a little bit to feel supported. To know that you are not forgotten. That somewhere, people feel for you."

Joke didn't find it difficult to get started. She accessed the <u>Tips</u> page on our website, as well as has been successful in her efforts to write a bit in Ukrainian by trying some of the <u>Ukrainian Phrases</u>, also found on

our website. She's even expanded her efforts by using a digital translation service to translate more personalized messages.

We never know what's going to land in our mailbox at *Postcards to the Front*, and Joke's cards are no exception to the *surprise factor*. She includes a lovely mix of Netherlands scenes as well as clear "support Ukraine" images. Her messages match the image.



For instance, a flower card becomes a flower gift to a Defender. A card with a picture of a train communicates Joke's understanding that "Ukraine is very proud of its train network." She also found some free photos on <u>Unsplash</u> that

she had printed into cards that she thought would communicate her specific reasons for supporting Ukraine. For instance, "one is of a meeting in Amsterdam to support Ukraine. This year I attended that meeting."



Like many others who write postcards to Ukraine's Defenders, Joke also supports Ukraine financially. Specifically, "organizations that buy defensive materials such as helmets, ballistic vests, and trauma kits. Or that give other kinds of practical help, such as a shelter for refugees in Ukraine."

Whatever her contribution, Joke hopes that Ukrainian Defenders do "feel a bit of support." That her postcard messages serve as "a reminder that they are not alone, and that people think of them."

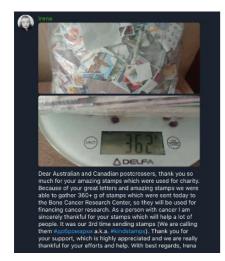
Writing a few postcards to Defenders is, in Joke's mind, "a small effort compared to what the Ukrainian people and the Ukrainian Defenders have to cope with. If you cannot help in another way, at least you can write messages of support."

News and Updates

By Helen

In memory of Irena

Since last year, we sent used postage stamps to Irena, in Ukraine, who collected them for the <u>Bone Cancer Research Trust</u>. Irena shared about her stamp project in our <u>January newsletter</u> (pp 21-29), as well as told us about how she navigated health care to get cancer treatment, during war time. Very difficult, as you can imagine.



Sadly, Irena has succumbed to her cancer and has passed away. I learned this news the day that I had planned to ship our next batch of stamps to her.

And there they still sit; a massive pile of stamps, overflowing on my desk. Waiting for a cause.

I've decided to continue to send the stamps, in Irena's memory, to the <u>Bone Cancer Research Trust</u>. Check their <u>Stamp Appeal</u> page for details.

A few months ago, our American veteran friend, <u>Marcus</u>, introduced us to <u>Stamps for the Wounded</u> (SFTW), which is dedicated to providing comfort and stimulating activity to U.S. veterans through stamp collecting.

Wonderful! Two places where I can send Irena's last big batch of stamps.

In Irena's memory.

Then, I wondered, where might we send stamps in Canada? I have learned that Oxfam Canada collects and sells the stamps at auctions as a fundraiser to help support their Stamp Out Poverty program. They'll get the next batch.

And what about Australia? One stamp-collecting organization that I have discovered is Mary MacKillop Today where stamp donations support their work with very poor communities in Australia and abroad.

Please check the links provided before you send stamps. Each organization has unique guidelines and preferences.

Perhaps you'll donate your stamps in memory of our friend, Irena, from Ukraine, who collected stamps to support bone cancer research. The cancer that took her life during war time.

Contact information -

Bone Cancer Research Trust, United Kingdom

Stamp Appeal (you have to access their website)

ATTN: Oxfam Stamp Program

Oxfam Canada

39 McArthur Ave Ottawa, ON K1L 8L7 Canada

Stamps for the Wounded

P.O. Box 297 Dunn Loring, VA 22027-0297 USA

Mary MacKillop Today

PO Box 1646 North Sydney NSW 2059 Australia



Christmas in Summer

This is our third year running a *Christmas in Summer* campaign.

Why now? Because we need lots of lead time for cards to travel to the front lines in time for the holidays.

All cards that arrive in our Canada / Australia post boxes by the end of September will make their way to front line Defenders in time for Christmas.

And you don't have to spend a lot of money buying Christmas postcards. You can use any postcard. The *message* that you write can convey your festive wishes. Simple drawings and/or stickers can add a bit of colour and an extra sparkle of festive joy to your message.

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 care and love, that offer light and warmth, rather than a strictly religious message.

After all, the goal is to send a message of love and support that 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.

Already, Canada branch has received 130 cards for festive December. Please, keep them coming!

Here are a few phrases for you to consider in your messages. *Try some writing in Ukrainian,* sure to make a Defender smile!

Нехай світло Різдва осяє вас духовно. Let Christmas light to shine mentally. (a bit of wordplay as they often don't have electricity)

| Зі святами! Ми молимось за вас! | Happy holidays! We pray for you! |
|--|---|
| Нехай свята принесуть щастя і спокій у вашу оселю. | Let holidays bring happiness and calmness into your home. |
| 3 Різдвом! Бажаю вам добра і звитяги! | Merry Christmas! I wish you a kindness and bravery! |
| Де б ви не були - з Різдвом і Новим роком! | Whenever you are - Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! |
| Бажаю зібратись за різдвяним столом з рідними поскоріше. | I wish you to have a Christmas table [in the meaning of dinner] with your family as soon as possible. |

Need some cards? Be in touch.

Need more ideas about what to write? Check our <u>Tips</u> page, and our <u>Ukrainian phrases</u> page.

Maybe you want to organize a group of family, friends or others to write some holiday postcards to Defenders? Check our website for tips, <u>How to Run a Postcard-Writing Workshop</u>. Consider a group effort this summer to help us with the *Christmas in Summer* campaign, so there will be a lot of messages of love and support arriving at the front lines in time for December. By then, it will be nearly four years that Ukrainians have been defending their homes, their land, their freedom, their lives.



You're invited to another contest!

Inspired by US veteran Marcus' 200 cards campaign, of which she was the winner, Brigitte from Quebec, who we told you about in our <u>February 2025 newsletter</u>, has issued her own challenge. Each postcard warrior that writes 50 postcards to Defenders for our *Christmas in Summer* campaign will receive an envelope of assorted postcards, to do as they like (maybe write more cards to Defenders?).

This contest runs all through July, August and September. Winners will be announced mid-October.



Holodomor National Awareness Bus Tour visits Oshawa Museum

There are times when we're not *just* doing our work to educate others about Ukraine through *Postcards to the Front*. We're also learning, through collaboration, such as a recent summer day at the Oshawa Museum, where the *Holodomor National Awareness Bus Tour* pulled in for two days of educational awareness about the Holodomor in Ukraine – famine-genocide by Stalin [the Soviet Union] between 1932-1933.





The Holodomor Mobile Classroom tours Canada to raise awareness of the Holodomor and to promote core Canadian values. Bringing of awareness the Holodomor to tens of thousands of Canadians and demonstrating that lessons of this genocide are relevant in the world today.

We're grateful to have been invited to set up *Postcards to the Front* for Holodomor Awareness visitors to write messages of support to Ukraine's Defenders.





Click <u>here</u> to book the Holodomor Awareness bus at your school or in your community. You can also access virtual lessons, available <u>here</u>. And there's so much more on their website, <u>Holodomor National Awareness Tour</u>. Check it out! Follow on <u>Facebook</u>.





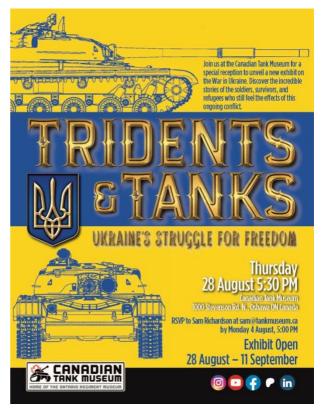


Tridents & Tanks – Oshawa, Ontario

More gratitude for collaboration!

Join us at the <u>Canadian Tank Museum</u> for a special reception to unveil a new exhibit on the war in Ukraine: **Thursday, August 28, 5:30pm**. The Canadian Tank Museum is located at 1000 Stevenson Road North, Oshawa, Ontario.

Discover the incredible stories of the soldiers, survivors, and refugees, some of whom have been sheltering in Canada for more than three years, and who still feel the effects of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.



And, you are also invited to write postcard messages to Ukraine's Defenders!

Tridents & Tanks also features the poignant documentary, <u>Doors of War</u>, that illustrates the tragedies faced by Ukrainians since Russia's invasion. Ruslan Kurt, a Crimean-Ukrainian activist and installation artist, transports and exhibits doors damaged by Russia's war to heighten awareness in his new home, Canada.



Please join us! And wear your vyshyvanka, in solidarity with Ukraine.

The exhibit runs from August 28 – September 11.

The Canadian Tank Museum

An Accredited Canadian Armed Forces Museum 1000 Stevenson Road North Oshawa, ON L1J 5P5 * Canada

Tel: 905.728.6199



Who you're writing to -







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!

As Kerry's friend, a medic at the front lines, told her –

It's only thanks to people like you that help to provide us what we need and to give us hope through your letters for our troops.

It shows to us that we are not alone and not forgotten.

You are just as vital in our fight for freedom as a soldier or a medic.

We are all part of the same chain. Everyone is needed to keep it strong and unbreakable.

That's why you are a hero for me and the people of Ukraine."

Thank you for your continued support of Defenders of Ukraine!

And please ... share and subscribe!









Let's write some Ukrainian!

Try one, or a couple, of the below Ukrainian phrases on your cards. After all, what better way to express your support and affection than 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!

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

You can find even more phrases <u>here</u>. Thank you for your efforts!

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 Ви захищаєте свою батьківщину,

brave and courageous. 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

Please, be careful. будь ласка, будьте обережні.

Ве 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!

Volume 2, Issue 12

We send you our continuous support.

час.

Canada stands with you. Канада 3A вас.

I wish you a victory. Бажаю вам перемоги.



Remember – 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 Nadia in Zaporizhzhia region, Ukraine reminds us -



Postcard support gives strength and courage.

Nadia



Thank you for your continued support of Defenders of Ukraine!