

Postcards to the Front

International Newsletter

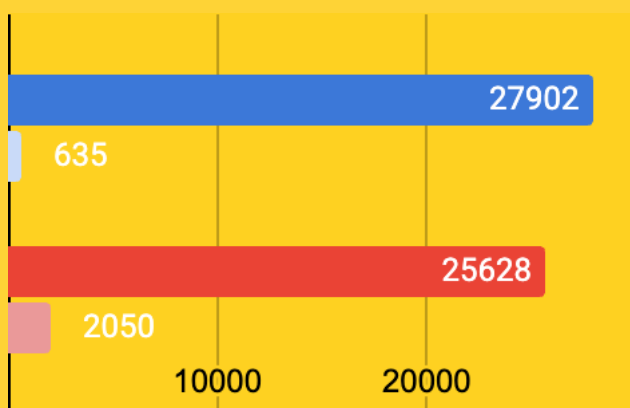
July / August 2026

Ukraine
Australia
Canada



Volume 3
Joint Issue 12 & 13

A Month in Postcards



These months our postcard warriors from Australia sent 635 cards and from Canada sent 2,050 cards. Australia's total sent is now 27,902 cards and Canada's is now 25,628.

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

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About

Postcards to the Front International Newsletter is a publication of the project **Postcards to the Front**. Founded by three Ukrainian women shortly after Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the idea of sending messages of support and encouragement to the frontline Defenders of Ukraine spread out on [Postcrossing.com](https://www.postcrossing.com) – an international postcard exchange platform. Branches of *Postcards to the Front* have been established in Australia 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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Editor's Note

Postcards to the Front "On the Edge" with Philip Ittner



Everything you want to know about *Postcards to the Front* is right here, "On the Edge", in a podcast interview, "[Bringing Light to the Darkness in Ukraine](#)", with American journalist Philip Ittner. Philip has embedded himself in Ukraine since the full-scale invasion in 2022 with the goal to gather and tell stories of Ukraine, in real time, keeping a spotlight on Ukraine so the world doesn't forget. Check it out. Subscribe to Philip's site. Buy him and his incredible team a coffee. Write a postcard to a Defender. We can help you get started on our [Practical Tools](#) page.

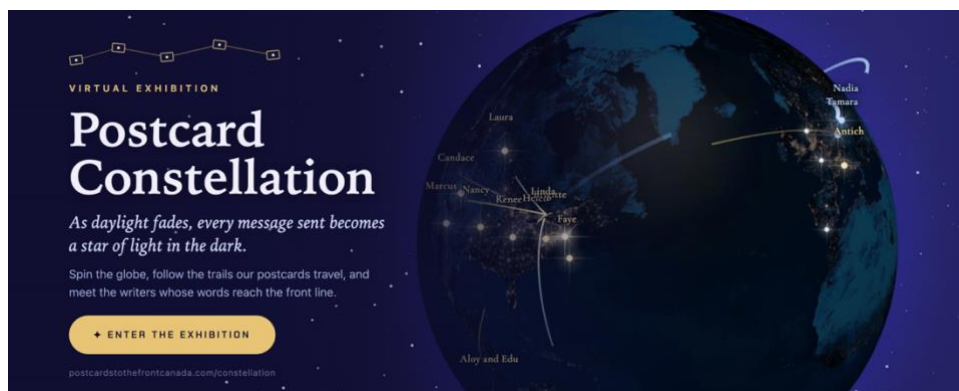
We send a huge shout-out of gratitude to Linda, our Creative Director who does the layout work for our newsletter, and who finds ways to improve our website such as the installation of a [Ukrainian phrasebook](#) where you can now hear phrases that we suggest you try to write on your postcard. And, if you haven't yet seen it, Linda also recently created our 3D interactive [Postcard Constellation](#) where you can spin the globe, follow the trails that postcards travel, and meet the writers whose words reach the front line. Thank you, Linda!

Postcard Constellation: An Exhibition Written in the Language of the Night Sky

By Linda

Dear readers,

Linda here from the Canada Branch — I should like to introduce you to something new on our homepage: [Postcard Constellation](#), a web-based interactive exhibition showcasing the people involved in this project.



Where the idea came from

The idea is borrowed, and I am happy to say so. Since 2022 I have been running [Stamp Out War: Support Ukraine!](#), a philatelic humanitarian art project with a far more specialized bent and, inevitably, a rather niche audience. For a long time I wanted to mount a physical installation for it: the maxicards (a kind of philatelic item that combines postcard, postage stamp, and postmark using the same theme) my global team created, displayed alongside an interactive program that would visualize the trajectories those maxicards had traveled, together with interviews about who the participants are and how they came to be involved.

ABOUT ME

I am Linda — newsletter layout editor, website designer, and the newly (self-)appointed Creative Director for *Postcards to the Front*, a title I awarded myself sometime this summer and have not yet been asked to relinquish. I also work at a postal counter in Montreal, where I have designed pictorial cancellations for several local post offices — [Le Devoir wrote about that work](#) (in French), if you're curious what art can look like in a postmark. I am also a long-distance touring cyclist, a visual artist, and an ex-mathematician who somehow ended up making maxicards. I run [Stamp Out War: Support Ukraine!](#), the philatelic humanitarian project that first taught me how much a small object carried a long way can mean — this newsletter [asked me about it back in Volume 1, Issue 3](#). Most of the visual representation you see on the Canada Branch's website — the layout, the globe full of light — I conceived myself and built with the help of AI, on the conviction that the stories this project gathers deserve to travel as far as the cards do. More of my work lives at [lindasartworld.ca](#).

Alas, that grant application to the Canada Council for the Arts was declined, and so, in want of funding, the physical installation may never take place.

Nevertheless, I didn't want the idea of interactivity to go to waste — and the longer I thought about it, the more convinced I became that *Postcards to the Front* stands to benefit from it far more. This is a much more human-oriented project. The cards matter, but the people on either end of them matter more, and connection between people can genuinely be the focus here in a way it could not be there. So, over the course of about a week, with the help of the AI service I had recently subscribed to for several of my personal projects, I built the thing I had been imagining — with a few twists to fit the *Postcards to the Front* model.

Why not simply a blog post?

I have found the blog format too limiting for what we are trying to do. We can embed maps, images and YouTube videos, certainly — but embedding is not the same as integrating, and a page of separate embedded objects is neither intuitive nor especially fun.

Consider a single sentence: this card traveled from Singapore to Canada, and from there to Ukraine. On paper it is a line of text you skim past. On a 3D globe, that same journey becomes a long, animated arc you can watch being drawn — and suddenly it is an education in world geography, particularly for younger visitors. The information was always there. Interactivity is what makes someone want to receive it.

That is the wager behind this whole exhibition: if we make things visually appealing and intuitively enjoyable, more people will be willing to read the interviews, listen to the voices, and sit with the stories we have gathered.

A second reading

There is another reason, and it is one that has been quietly bothering me for some time.

We work hard on each issue of the [newsletter](#). But a newsletter is read once, if we are lucky, and then it is set down. Our archive keeps growing — which is a good problem to have, and also a real one, because the larger it becomes, the more daunting it is for anyone to go back and dig out a particular article. Stories we spent weeks gathering end up sitting where nobody will stumble across them again.

The exhibition is my attempt at an answer. Every second month, with the publication of our newsletter, a new constellation brings forward a group of postcard warriors we have written about before, together with those we newly introduce in the latest issue, gathered by something they share. The old stories return to the surface, in new company and in a new light. Nothing we publish has to be read only once. **And no story stands alone. It is but one star in the constellation of stories about Ukraine; particularly, about the relationships our postcard warriors have with Ukraine, with their understanding and support of Ukraine.**

The language of the night sky

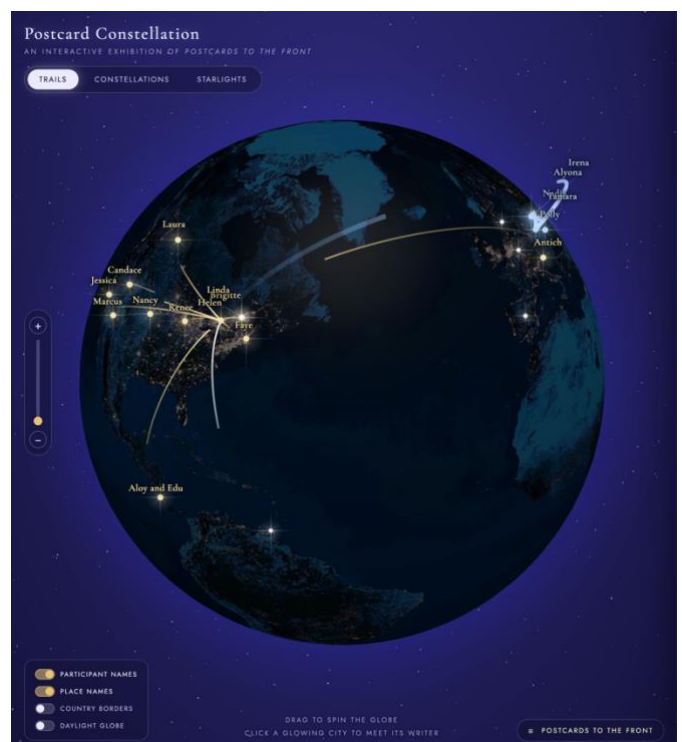
The exhibition is curated in the visual language of the night sky.

Every postcard becomes a starlight, shining against the dark of night. The trails these lights leave behind illuminate a world otherwise smothered by the darkness of war. That image is the heart of the presentation — not decoration, but the argument itself.

(For practical reasons I have added a button to toggle the daylight texture on and off, in case the night globe is not clear enough for some visitors. But the night is where this belongs.)

The three modules

Trails is the 3D globe. It animates the journeys our mails have taken — shown as direct arcs only, since the true mail routes are complex and largely unknown — each trajectory drawn across the surface of the earth, from wherever a card was written to wherever it was ultimately received. Three kinds of stars share that sky: with profiles our postcard warriors, in yellow; and the Ukrainians who have shared their stories of living through war with *Postcards to the Front*, in blue. In white are other contributors whom we haven't written about publicly.



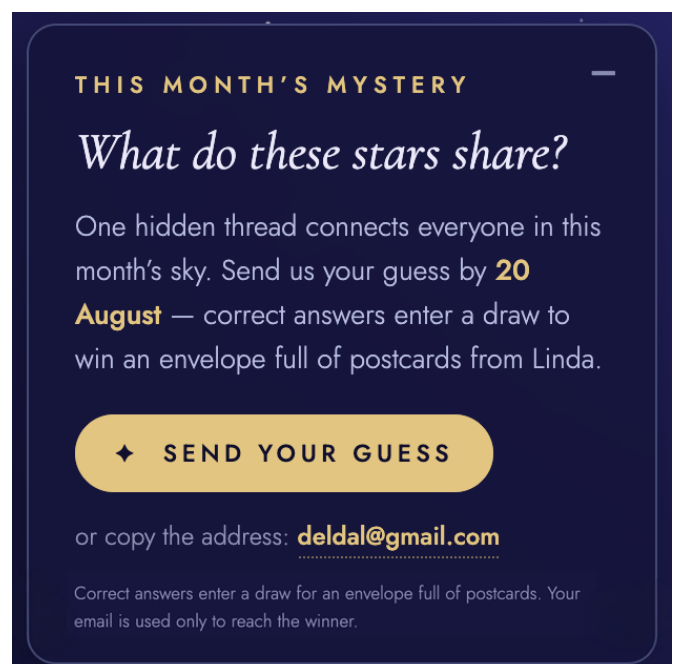
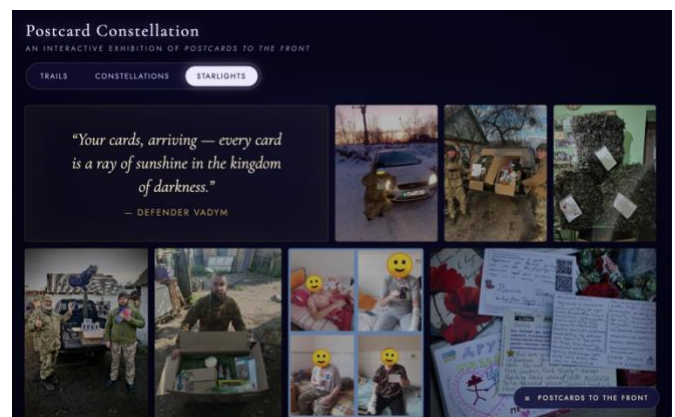
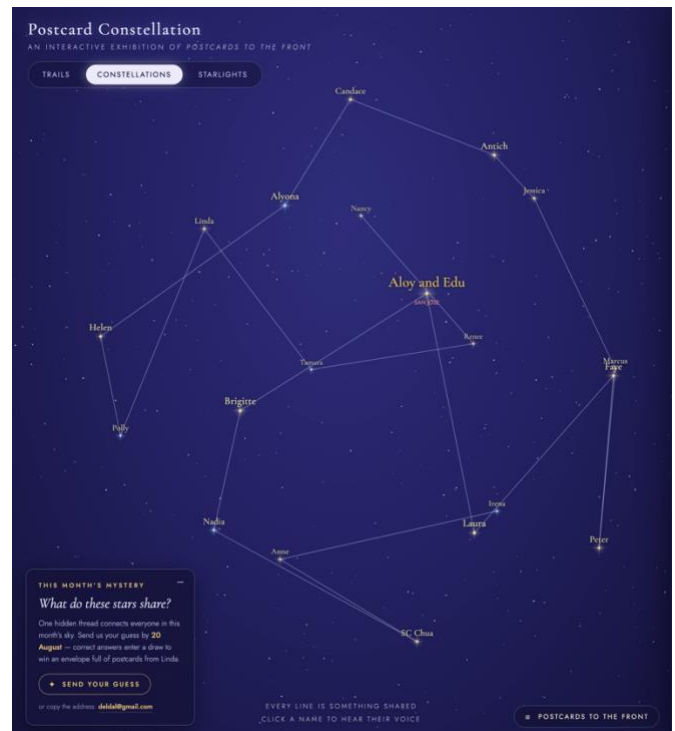
Constellations moves into abstract space. Here each postcard warrior curated for that bimonthly edition occupies a point, like a star in the universe, and forms different constellations with the others according to what they have in common — and the Ukrainians whose stories anchor that edition take their place too, still glowing blue among the yellow. Different shared attributes produce different constellations. The shape of the community changes depending on what you ask of it.

Starlights is a gallery of Defenders holding these sources of light — and it, too, is programmed in the language of illumination. Hover over a photograph, and it lights up.

The connectivity theme, and a guessing game

Each edition carries a connectivity theme — an attribute shared across the constellation currently on display. The theme itself is the subject of a guessing game: visitors are invited to work out what these warriors have in common.

The rhythm runs like this. Guesses close on the 20th of every second month. In the weeks that follow, while the team is at work on the upcoming issue of the newsletter, we post the answer on our website, draw a winner from the correct entries, and notify them by email. The winner is then announced



publicly, too — in that newly published newsletter issue and on the website — under whatever name they would like to be known by: their own, or simply “anonymous,” if they would rather not be named. Then, with the release of the newest newsletter, a fresh constellation goes up in the sky, and the guessing begins again.

I should add, for anyone wondering: the entire database on which this exhibition is built is drawn from our own newsletter and blog content. Everything in it has already been published. No privacy concern here.

What I hope it does

This has a genuine educational component, and it works in two directions — it informs, and it calls people to act.

The 3D globe gives a visual, accessible, easy-to-read representation of the global connectivity that defines this project. For our visitors, that matters: our supporters value the international character of what we do, and now they can see it rather than take it on faith.

From the perspective of Ukraine, a visual representation of the expanse of global support — arcs of light crossing the night sky in place of bomb trajectories — may be a genuine morale-booster for the Defenders, and for everyone at home.

Please share *The Postcard Constellation* with educators. I suspect it may generate classroom or school-based involvement in ways none of us can foresee.

And in the end

My ultimate wish, as an artist, is to put forward a physical exhibition for *Postcards to the Front* somewhere in this world — of which this interactive set-up would be a part. That day may still come.

For now, I am perfectly happy to stay with the online model, and perfectly happy that these particular stars are visible from anywhere with a screen.

Come and look up.

Guess the constellation — Answer for Round One

By Linda

Round one, the answer

Our virtual exhibition, [Postcard Constellation](#), has been keeping a secret since its launch.

Twenty of our postcard warriors and Ukrainian friends shone together as one figure with no name, and readers were invited to work out what connected them.

The answer was [Postcrossing](#). Every one of them came to the project through Postcrossing, the postcard-exchange community — and many of them found each other there too. The figure has its name back. Look for **The Postcrossers**, lit in gold in the Constellations module.



Figure: Answer for Round One: Postcrossing. Every star shone in the August sky is a Postcrosser.

How the game works

Every two months, one figure raises up in the night sky without name. Working out what hidden thread connects every star in it is the game. The clues are all in their published interviews. Wander the sky, click any star, and read that person's story. The answer is somewhere in there.

To enter,

1. Open the exhibition and switch to the [Constellations module](#).
2. Look at who is up there, and decide what they all share in common.
3. Press Send your guess on the mystery card and type your answer.

Everyone with the right answer goes into a draw to win an envelope full of postcards from my collection — perfect for writing your own messages to Ukraine’s Defenders, or for your personal projects.

No winner this round

Nobody found the correct answer this time. We had guesses, but none landed on Postcrossing. So round one closes without a winner.

This is allowed to happen. A mystery that nobody can miss is not much of a mystery, and we would rather set one that makes you look properly at who is up there than one that gives itself away. Thank you to everyone who sent a guess in — you read the sky exactly as we hoped you would.

Round two

A fresh figure is in the sky as of today, and it has no name either.

Entries close on **20 October 2026**, and everyone with the right answer goes into the draw for the next envelope of postcards from me.

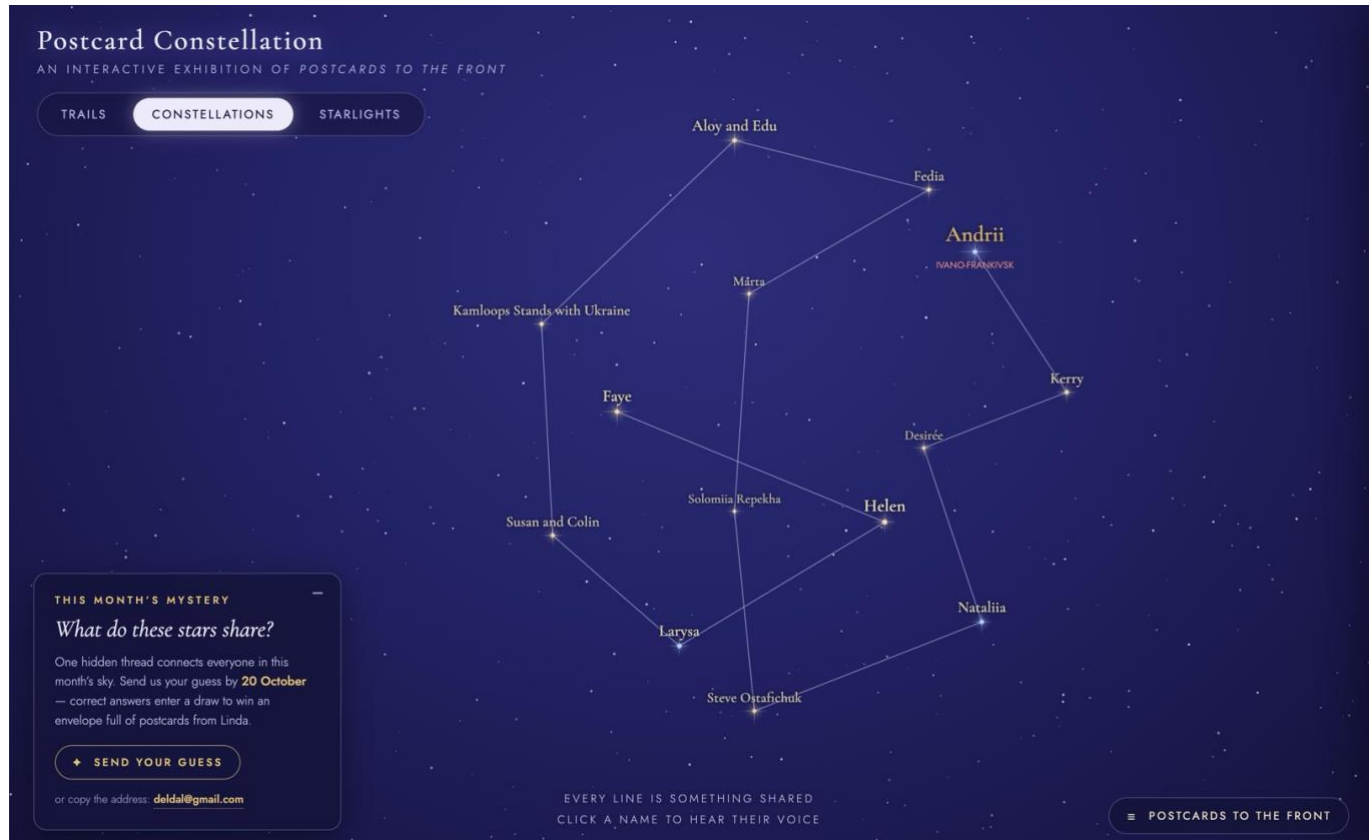
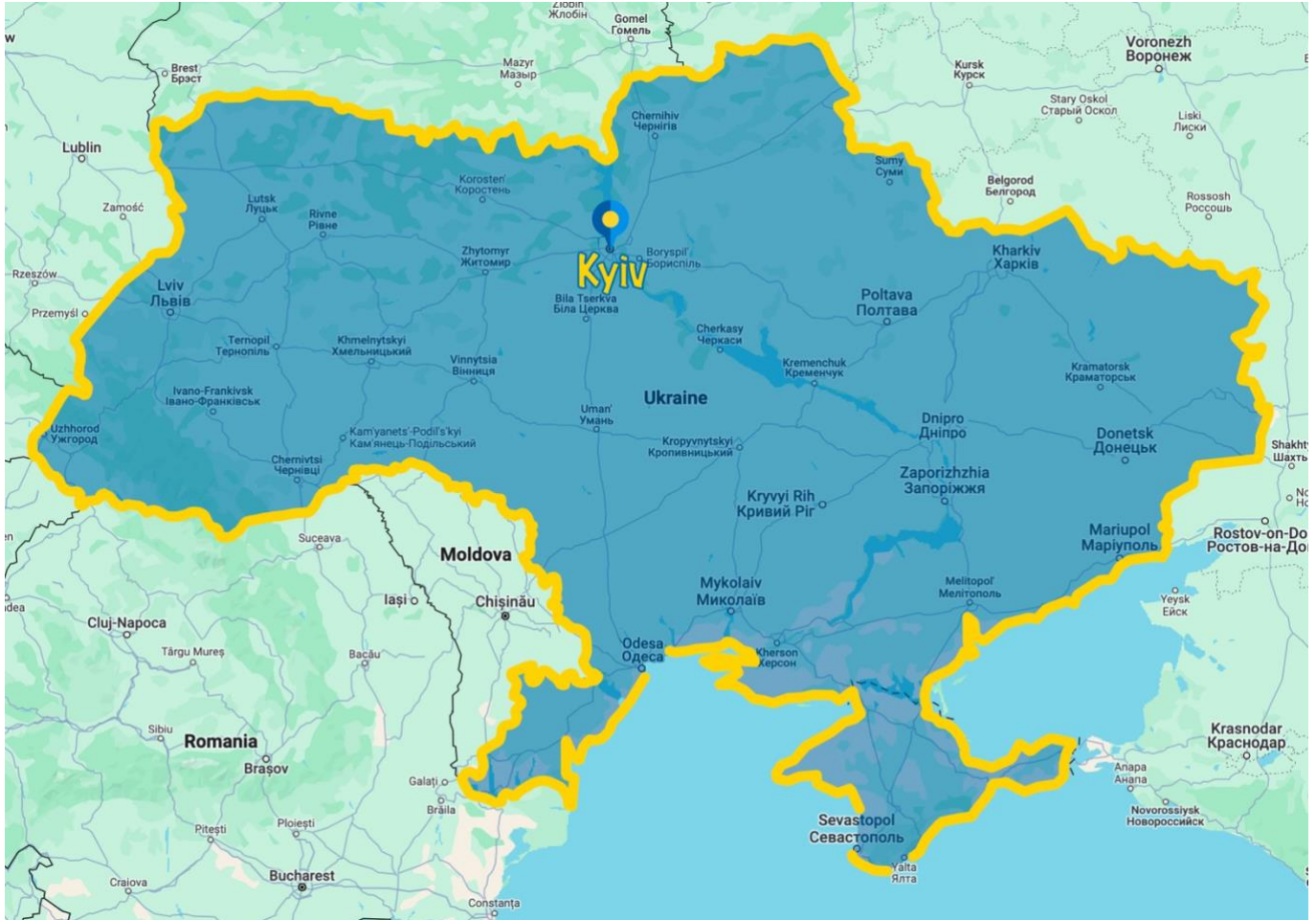


Figure: Round Two of the Constellation guessing game. What do these stars share?

Write from the Heart

By Helen



Once-upon-a-time, Kyiv was full of life with concerts, festivals and many other different social and cultural events. Tourists traveled to Kyiv from all over the world. It never slept for the vibrancy that it was.



That's how Sergii described his city to us. Pre-invasion.

Kyiv still doesn't sleep. But it's a fitful frightful time with ballistic missiles and drones raining terror from the sky. Day-and-night, sirens and bombs, explosions and weeping.

Kyiv began to feel quiet and almost empty to Sergii.

"It was clear that people are what give the city its life and energy. And now, despite the constant air raid alerts and

attacks, Kyiv is coming back to life. People want to live, and little by little the city is attracting visitors from around the world again.”

Before the full-scale invasion Sergii loved to travel with family or friends in Ukraine and abroad.

“I just loved being on the move. Sadly, I really miss traveling. I can still travel around Ukraine because I work remotely, but it doesn’t bring me the same joy as it did before. Everything has changed.”

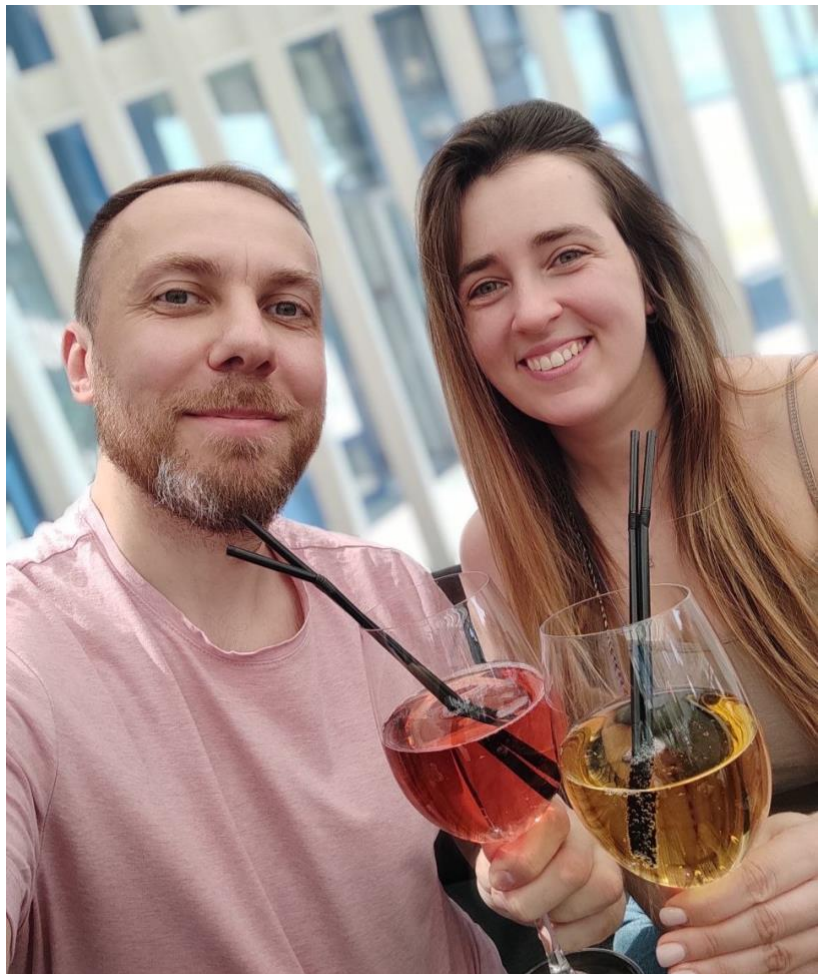
Sergii misses many friends who have moved abroad while others joined the Armed Forces to defend Ukraine.

Since the full-scale invasion, Sergii told us that he has “learned many things I never thought I would need to know in peacetime, like recognizing different types of missiles and drones, how to use a tourniquet, and what to pack in an emergency bag. The way I see the world has also changed. No one expected to see such evil in the heart of Europe in the 21st century.”

Sergii writes often to Defenders. He first heard about *Postcards to the Front* from Tamara, who told the Ukrainian [Postcrossing](#) community about it in 2023.

“Later,” he added, “Helen also told me about the project on the Postcrossing Forum.”

As a Ukrainian with a passion for the art of postcard communication, Sergii told us that “I think people should always write from the heart. Besides words of thanks and support, postcard warriors can also share small personal stories that may inspire a Defender and remind





them who and what they are protecting. This is especially meaningful when children write postcards.”

Further, he noted, “postcards remind Defenders and their families that they are not alone. They show that people around the world support them and that there is something worth fighting for.”

Unfortunately, none of the Defenders that Sergii knows has received postcards like those gathered through *Postcards to the Front*.

“I have seen many photos online from other Defenders [who have received postcards]. Their faces show smiles and tears of joy, especially when the postcards are written by children. Children are the future of Ukraine, and that is what they are fighting for.”

Sergii is a regular reader of our newsletter, “always curious to see what you have prepared, what activities you have organized, and who you will introduce us to next.”

He offered us some suggestions for future issues.

“I would love to read more stories from Defenders about receiving postcards, although I understand that it is not always easy to get those stories. It would also be interesting to read more about different parts of Ukraine, our traditions, culture, and history. Or maybe interviews with people from other countries about what they know about Ukraine.”

All great ideas!

We encourage any of our readers to reach out and offer some suggestions, and to share with us



about their knowledge about Ukraine before the full-scale invasion and how awareness has changed over the past 4½ years.

Along with gratitude for the support that Ukraine receives, that Defenders receive, Sergii expressed a sadness that “with the war still going on, we cannot forget it, even for a moment. Please continue to support Ukraine and Ukrainians in any way you can. Donate to trusted organizations, volunteer, and keep telling people about the war – in schools, on TV, or wherever you can. If there are Ukrainian refugees in your country, please support them too.”

And when the day of victory arrives, Sergii believes that “Ukraine will be more united, stronger, and most importantly, free. Ukrainians are no longer afraid of destruction because we know that after the war we will rebuild everything together.”

And, he projects, Ukraine will need help from other countries to rebuild Ukraine and to clear landmines.

“People can [also] support us by visiting Ukraine and to discover its beauty, culture, and diversity.”

Sergii’s final words to postcard warriors: “thank you for this wonderful project and for your great support of our Defenders and the Ukrainian people. Thank you!”



Small acts of kindness and solidarity

By Solomiia Repekha

*Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) Youth Ambassador 2025–2026
Founder, By Choice Collective (@bychoicecollective)*

I was in middle school when Russia invaded Ukraine in 2014. I still remember my teachers inviting our class to write postcards to Ukrainian soldiers serving on the front lines. Many young men from my hometown had already volunteered to defend our country, making the initiative feel deeply personal.

I spent a long time writing my message, trying to make it as heartfelt, genuine, and encouraging as possible. Even as a child, I hoped that a few simple words could bring comfort to someone far from home.

Today, I am an adult living thousands of kilometres away from Ukraine and my hometown. Although I'm far away, I'm grateful that I can still support Ukrainian soldiers, medics, and volunteers on the front lines through *Postcards to the Front*.



It feels incredibly meaningful to be writing these postcards again. Together with my sister @olena.repekha, I had the opportunity to write messages on several beautiful postcards that are on their way to Ukraine. We hope our words bring even a small moment of comfort and express our gratitude to those defending Ukraine.

On Canada Day, *Postcards to the Front* celebrated the incredible milestone of sending more than 50,000 postcards to Ukraine's frontline Defenders via both Canada and Australia branches. It's a remarkable achievement and a powerful reminder that even small acts of kindness and solidarity can make a real difference.

If this initiative speaks to you, I encourage you to take part. Writing a postcard takes only a few minutes, but it can mean so much to someone on the front lines. Simply reach out to *Postcards to the Front*, and they will be happy to guide you through the process. 📧

Every postcard is a reminder that Ukraine's Defenders are seen, appreciated, and never alone. 🇺🇦🤝🇨🇦



Ukrainian Canadian Congress Youth Ambassador Program

In 2025, I became involved with the work of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) after being selected as one of only 16 Youth Ambassadors from across Canada to join the second cohort of the UCC's prestigious Youth Ambassadors Program, representing Toronto, Ontario.

The Ukrainian Canadian Congress is the national umbrella organization representing the Ukrainian Canadian community. Through advocacy, education, leadership development, and community initiatives, the UCC works to preserve Ukrainian culture and heritage, strengthen Ukrainian Canadian communities, and promote continued Canadian humanitarian, political, and military support for Ukraine.

One of its flagship initiatives, the Youth Ambassadors Program, empowers emerging young leaders to develop the skills, knowledge, and networks needed to create meaningful change in their communities while advocating for Ukraine.

Throughout my term, I have participated in monthly leadership seminars covering topics ranging from public policy, advocacy, public speaking, media relations, fundraising, project management to community leadership.

Alongside fellow Youth Ambassadors from across Canada, I have grown my leadership skills while gaining the knowledge, confidence, and practical skills to turn ideas into meaningful action.

For instance, I attended the 28th Triennial Congress of Ukrainian Canadians in November 2025, advocated for Ukraine's needs on Parliament Hill in Ottawa through meetings with Members of Parliament and government ministers, and created *By Choice Collective* – a storytelling project dedicated to sharing inspirational stories of people from around the world who have chosen to stand with Ukraine.

To learn more about this work, to meet the other inspiring Youth Ambassadors and program alumni, or to discover how the Ukrainian Canadian Congress is empowering the next generation of leaders while strengthening support for Ukraine, please visit the official [UCC Youth Ambassadors Program](#) page and the [Ukrainian Canadian Congress](#) website.



By Choice Collective

By Choice Collective is an online storytelling platform that I created as part of my role as a Youth Ambassador with the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (2025–2026). The project was founded on a simple yet powerful idea: to celebrate the people around the world who have made a conscious choice to stand with Ukraine.

Through personal interviews presented in a narrative and visually engaging format, *By Choice Collective* shares the stories of volunteers, advocates, humanitarian workers, language learners, community leaders, and everyday people whose actions reflect compassion, courage, and solidarity. Each story highlights that support for Ukraine goes beyond borders, cultures, and backgrounds – it is a choice rooted in shared humanity.

By amplifying these voices, the project aims to inspire hope, strengthen connections between Ukrainians and their allies, and to remind people that acts of solidarity, no matter how big or small, have the power to make a difference. Similar ideals and outreach as *Postcards to the Front* with postcard warriors all over the world.

To date, *By Choice Collective* has featured nine inspiring individuals from the United States and across Europe, with many more stories to come.

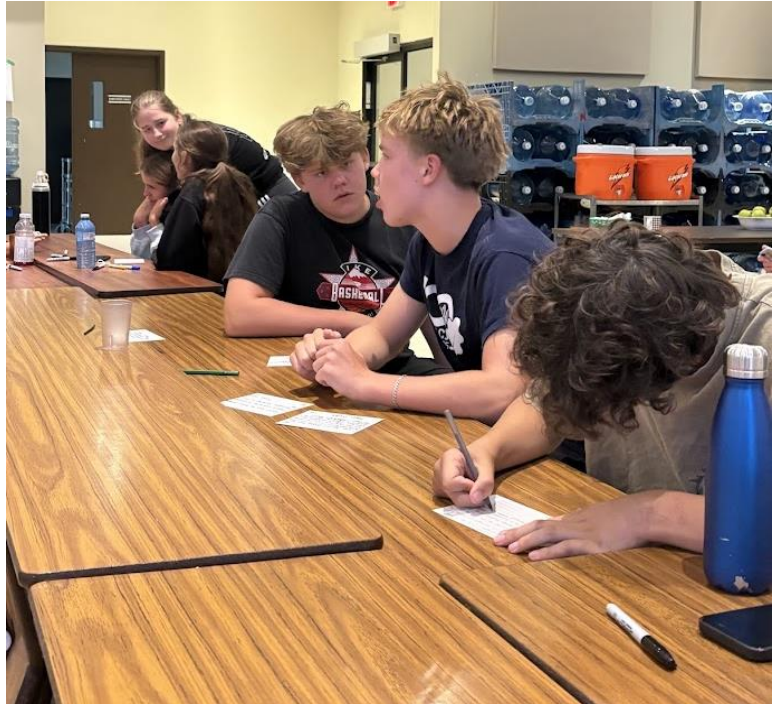
To read these stories of solidarity with Ukraine and to follow the project's journey, visit [By Choice Collective](#) on Instagram.

Though far away, close at heart

By Laryssa

For more than 80 years, the Ukrainian Youth Association of Canada (CYM) has played a vital role in nurturing generations of young Ukrainian Canadians through leadership, cultural preservation, and community engagement.

Founded in Canada in 1949, CYM became a home for Ukrainian youth whose families had arrived following the Second World War. Inspired by the ideals of the Ukrainian Youth Association established in Ukraine in 1925, CYM Canada was created to help young people maintain their Ukrainian identity and faith while becoming active and responsible citizens of Canada and while maintaining a strong relationship to Ukraine.



From its earliest days, CYM has been guided by the principles of God and Ukraine, encouraging members to develop strong moral character, leadership skills, and a lifelong commitment to serving both their communities and the Ukrainian nation. Today, CYM chapters across Canada offer programs for children, youth and young adults that combine education, recreation, and personal development.

Leadership development remains at the heart of the organization. This year, at Camp Weselka situated in Acton, Ontario, over 50 kids



On the evening of July 5th, our *сyмiвцi* took time to express their gratitude and support for the brave Defenders of Ukraine by writing heartfelt postcards to soldiers serving on the front lines.

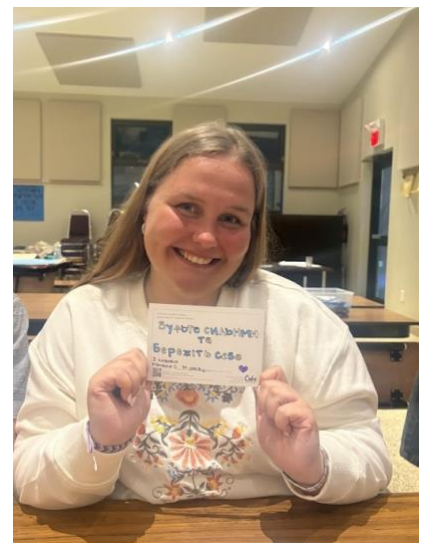
Each message carries a word of encouragement, hope, appreciation and reminds those defending Ukraine that they are not forgotten and that the Ukrainian diaspora stands with them.

participated in a leadership camp called *vyshtil* where they honed and developed their skills to become active participants and volunteers of the CYM *hromada*.

We began our *tabir* on June 27th. Kids had the opportunity to learn about the history of Ukraine, the situation of present Ukraine, ecocide, the illegal deportation of Crimean Tatars, while working with children at camp and within their *oseredky*, developing important attributes of a good leader, and much more.



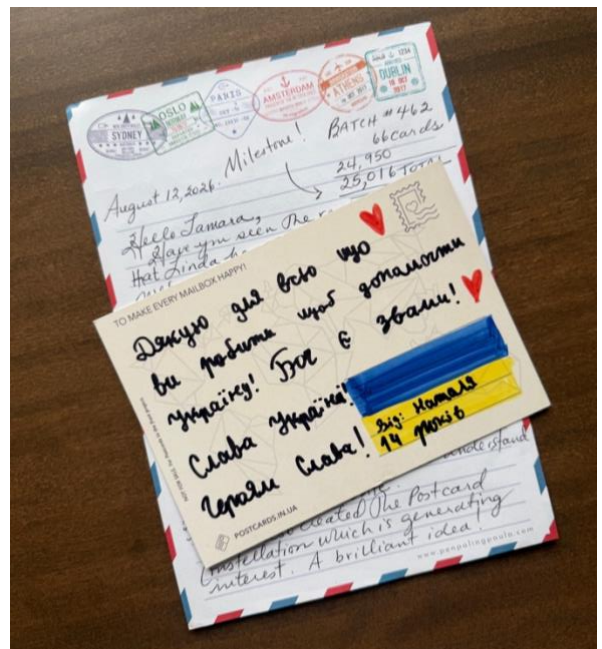
Each message carries a word of encouragement, hope, appreciation and reminds those defending Ukraine that they are not forgotten and that the Ukrainian diaspora stands with them.



This meaningful initiative gave our youth the opportunity to reflect on the sacrifices being made every day and to transform their gratitude into a personal act of solidarity. For many of our campers, the war is not a distant event. Some have mothers, fathers, siblings, relatives and close family friends currently serving on the front, while others have ones who continue to live under the constant threat of war in Ukraine.

Though separated by thousands of kilometers, these postcards serve as a powerful reminder that the hearts of our *cymibuzi* remain united with Ukraine.

The war may be taking place an ocean away but for many in our community, it is never far from their hearts. Through simple words of kindness and unwavering support, they continue the tradition of service, compassion, and national consciousness that defines CYM.



[Editor's Note: The 25,000th postcard to arrive in our mailbox was written by 14-year-old Natalia at CYM.]

The war may be taking place an ocean away but for many in our community, it is never far from their hearts.

Postcards have the potential to change someone's life, even if only for a brief moment

By Helen

We were surprised one day to find a package from Spain.

Desirée, who is studying law at Carlos III University of Madrid, has been swapping postcards with several Ukrainian women since April this year. She found Anna and Olga (Kyiv), Veronika and Iryna (Lviv), Marta (Odesa), Anita (Poltava region), and Anna (Zaporizhzhia), on Instagram.

"I like to think now that I have some ties with Ukraine, even if feeble. On their postcards I have always tried to use either the 'Spain with Ukraine' stamp that the Spanish Postal Service (Correos y Telégrafos) released (mimicking the Ukrainian flag) in 2022. Or (when I had run out of that one) 'the peace, greatest value of humanity' stamp." [We wrote about [support Ukraine stamps](#) in 2023]



Desirée uses the Ukrainian flag stamp even if it is more postage than necessary. That is, to send mail to Ukraine, from Europe, a B stamp would be enough (cheaper) than a C stamp, which is more expensive, as it is meant for the rest of the world.

"I think that using the support Ukraine stamp is a nice touch, showing support to the recipient through the stamp. One way to be considerate with their country's terrible situation."

For more than a decade, Desirée has been preparing for the (extremely complicated) official exams (one test and two orals) to become a judge.

“Every day (six days a week, no holidays nor days off when an exam is close) I memorize by heart (word for word) the articles of the Constitution, the Criminal Code, the Civil Code and the Laws of Criminal and Civil Procedure (320 lessons in total). I have classes twice a week with a judge who helps me prepare. I “sing” the lessons to him (recite by heart using a stopwatch to control time, as the oral exams consist of reciting 5 of those lessons in one hour, so each lesson has to be “sung” in no more than 12 minutes. We have to talk very very fast and know the codes/laws very fluently). It is very isolating work, as I am alone for years, every day just with the company of books, without seeing or talking with anybody. Studying 10 hours per day, or even 15 when the exams are nearing.”



Sometimes, Desirée admits, “I have the feeling that life is passing by while I study and look out of my windows. But I have the dream (since I was a young girl) of improving this world by imparting Justice... and, as I wrote to Defenders in my second batch of postcards, there are dreams and causes worthy of sacrificing your youth/life for.”

Since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Desirée has noticed that “everything became more expensive; especially, electricity, natural gas and oil for my father’s car. I don’t drive but I heard him complaining a lot about the price rises regarding energy.”

In the past, Desirée joined a project to support Palestine by crocheting watermelon halves.

“I believe in helping ‘smaller’ countries which are being bullied by the big boys unfairly. I have always had a weakness for the outcasts... maybe because (while growing up, for many years) I was the poor ugly duckling myself, with so many problems to fit in (I was different, an old soul who didn’t kneel at the rest of the teenagers’ interests). Perhaps that is why I prefer the David of the world to the Goliaths... and have faith they will end up winning against all odds. The butterfly must never forget that it once was a worm.”

Postcards have been Desirée's entrée into her support for Ukraine. First, via swaps with Ukrainian women. More recently, by writing postcard messages of support to Defenders of Ukraine through *Postcards to the Front*.

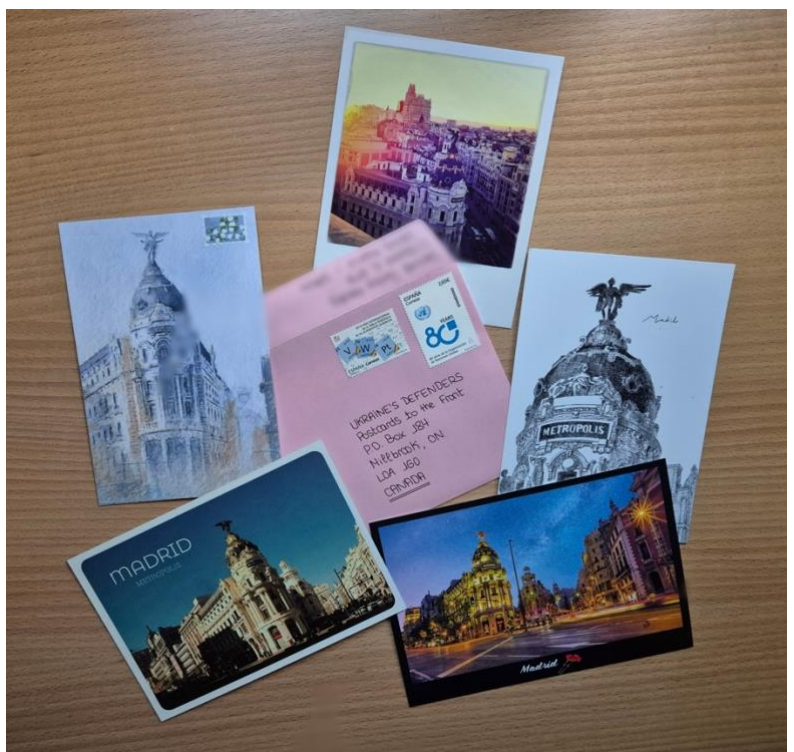
"I have recommended *Postcards to the Front* through my Instagram profile and in a couple of 'global group swaps' groups, trying to plant the seeds of volunteering to support Ukraine via postcards in others."

In May 2026, Desirée saw a post in a [Postcrossing](#) forum where "a woman named Linda [your layout editor] who was holidaying in France offered to send a postcard from Brittany. I had two Breton penpals from when I was 15 years old for about ten years. I had lost contact with them but had many fond memories of that region, so I felt nostalgia. I thought it would be nice to receive a postcard now from that area that was so meaningful to me in the past. I clicked. Then I read that, in exchange for that postcard, I would have to send an envelope full of postcards to encourage the Defenders of Ukraine and instantly liked the idea of the swap even more!"

Desirée immediately felt that her postcards were important as she realized that "they could make a difference and support people in real need."

A week after seeing Linda's original swap offer on Postcrossing, she repeated the offer; this time for postcards from Paris. Desirée asked to join again.

"So, the first two times, I got something out of writing postcards for Defenders (apart from the pride of being part of something bigger than me and my little postcards). It was not purely selfless. But then, I thought it was such a good cause that I would have done it had I known of it before, even without getting anything in return. In fact, right now I am preparing my third batch of postcards, this time in a totally altruistic way."





Desirée has put a lot of thought into what she writes on her postcards to Defenders.

“I didn’t want to send just any postcard, unrelated to their suffering. I wanted the image to say *something*... and [I wanted] a powerful text to match. My first choice was easy. I chose the Metropolis Building of Madrid and its fitting history of rebirth. The second time it was harder: I ended up being more introspective, choosing a metaphorical image and

writing a personal note that is closer to my own experience – my wish for freedom – drawing parallels to the desires of going back home that Defenders might harbour. Both texts have a common part: the mention of Spain’s (much smaller) victory over the (more powerful and bigger) French Empire of Napoleon (France invaded Spain in the 19th century, in a very similar way to Russia invading Ukraine nowadays) after 6 years of war (The Spanish War of Independence, 1808–1814) and against all odds. France was the most powerful country at the time, and way before Waterloo... it was beaten by Spain in Bailén.”

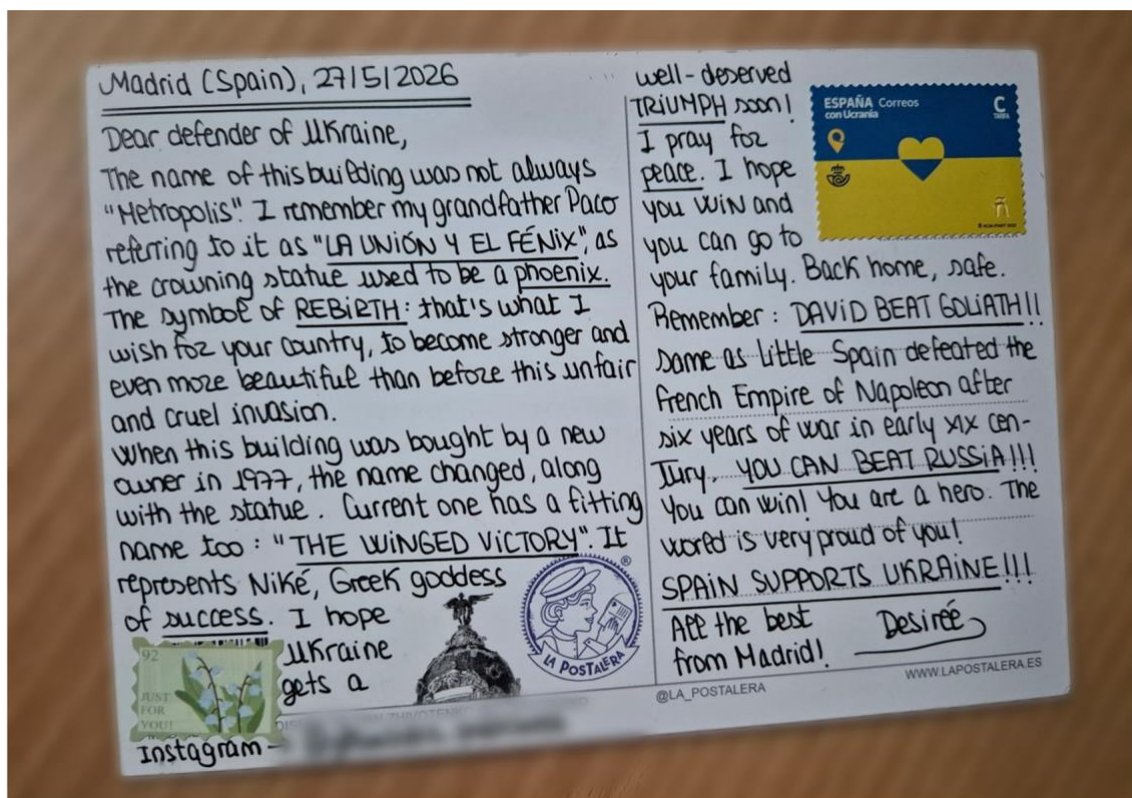
Desirée tells us that her third batch of cards will go deeper into the history of the Spanish War of Independence against the French, because “I have found postcards of Malasaña neighbourhood which are very fitting. Manuela Malasaña was a seamstress, one of the main characters at the start of said war, rebelling against the French invaders, defending Madrid on May 2, 1808 (that day is a regional holiday nowadays, marking the beginning of the war). Malasaña perished because of her rebellion.”

Here's the text from Desirée's first batch of postcards:

Madrid (Spain), 27th May 2026

Dear Defender of Ukraine,

The name of this building was not always "Metrópolis". I remember my grandfather Paco referring to it as "La Unión y el Fénix", as the crowning statue used to be a phoenix. The symbol of rebirth: that's what I wish for your country, to become stronger and even more beautiful than before this unfair and cruel invasion. When this building was bought by a new owner in 1977, the name changed, along with the statue. Current one has a fitting name too: "THE WINGED VICTORY". It represents Niké, Greek goddess of success. I hope Ukraine gets a well-deserved triumph soon. I pray for peace. I hope you win and you can go to your family. Back home, safe. Remember: DAVID BEAT GOLIATH!!! Same as little Spain defeated the French Empire of Napoleon after six years of war in early XIX century. YOU CAN BEAT RUSSIA!! You can win! You are a hero. The world is very proud of you! SPAIN SUPPORTS UKRAINE!!! All the best from Madrid, Desirée.

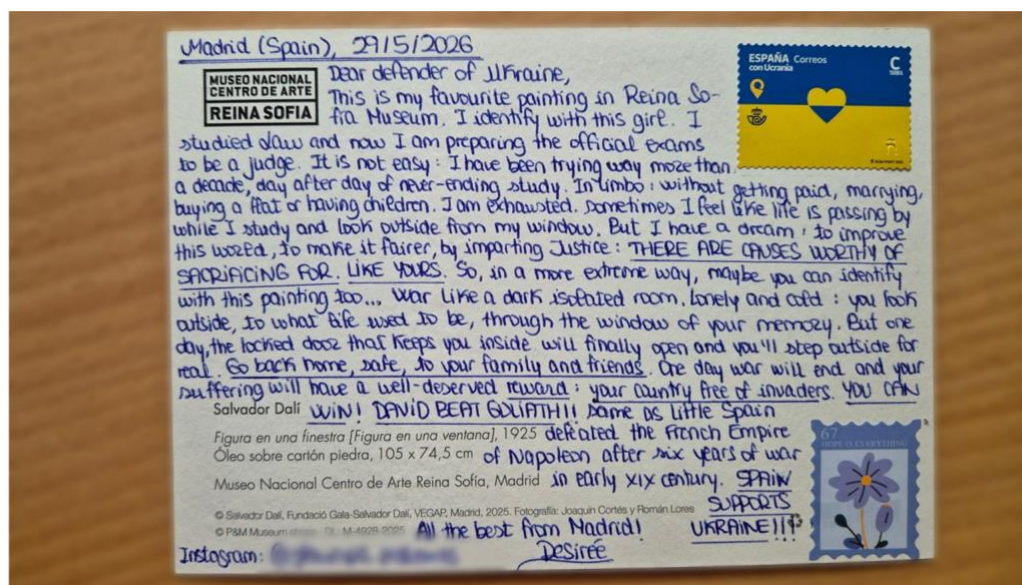


Now, the text used on Desirée's second batch of postcards:

Madrid (Spain), 29th May 2026

Dear Defender of Ukraine,

This is my favourite painting in Reina Sofia Museum. I identify with this girl. I studied Law and now I am preparing the official exams to be a judge. It is not easy: I have been trying way more than a decade, day after day of never-ending study. In limbo: without getting paid, marrying, buying a flat or having children. I am exhausted. Sometimes I feel like life is passing while I study and look outside from my window. But I have a dream: to improve the world, to make it fairer, by imparting Justice. THERE ARE CAUSES WORTHY OF SACRIFICING FOR. LIKE YOURS. So, in a more extreme way, maybe you can identify with this painting too... War like a dark isolated room, lonely and cold: you look outside, to what life used to be, through the window of your memory. But one day, the locked door that keeps you inside will finally open and you will step outside for real. Go back home, safe, to your family and friends. One day war will end and your suffering will have a well-deserved reward: your country free of invaders. YOU CAN WIN! DAVID BEAT GOLIATH!!! Same as little Spain defeated the French Empire of Napoleon after six years of war in early XIX century. SPAIN SUPPORTS UKRAINE!!! All the best from Madrid, Desirée.



Desirée claims no artistic talent. Rather, she believes “my strength is words ... so I keep decoration simple applying a sticker with a flower and a little word/phrase of encouragement – like “thanks!”, “dreams don’t sleep”, “find beauty in chaos”, “hope is everything” or “just for you!”) plus the Spanish stamp “Spain with Ukraine” that reproduces the Ukrainian flag. I know stamps are not necessary, as the postcards would be traveling together inside an envelope, but I think it was a powerful visual and official form of support.”

New to Postcrossing in February, it didn't take long for Desirée to fall in love with the idea of exchanging postcards. Between official postcards and direct swaps, she has written dozens of postcards every week over the past few months.

She explained that, with every postcard, “I try to capture a personal experience and preserve it like a small treasure, frozen in time. Perhaps, many years from now, the grandchildren of someone in Malaysia who received one of my postcards in 2026 will come across it among their grandparent’s belongings. If that happens, they will be holding not only a window into the past of another country and another culture, but also a time capsule into my own past: who I was, what worried me, what I dreamed of, what I valued, what amused me, and what filled me with wonder.”

Further, she added, “writing postcards is a way to bring a smile to a stranger’s face. But it is also a way of sharing ourselves, of reaching beyond our own lives, of leaving something behind. The written word makes us immortal.”

This is true in a beautiful sense, but also in a very ordinary one. That is, Desirée does not mean “that the words we write in a ‘normal’ postcard are unimportant or forgotten after a few days or weeks. Quite the opposite — I am sure recipients treasure them just as much as I treasure the postcards I receive. But, generally speaking, their significance goes no further than being part of a wonderful hobby.”



Writing postcards is a way to bring a smile to a stranger’s face. But it is also a way of sharing ourselves, of reaching beyond our own lives, of leaving something behind. The written word makes us immortal.

“That,” she continued, “is the rule... and, as with every general rule, there are extraordinary exceptions.”

Over the course of the past few months, Desirée has experienced two such exceptions; two occasions when she believes her words could help someone in a truly meaningful and tangible way. Not in a trivial sense, but in one that genuinely mattered.

“The first was when I answered a Postcrosser’s request to send postcards to the elderly residents of the nursing home where she works in Hamburg, Germany. Many of them can no longer travel, so postcards became a beautiful way to bring the world to them and ease their loneliness.”

The second has been writing to the Defenders of Ukraine “to offer them encouragement in one of the most extreme situations a human being can face. War.”

These two exceptions make Desirée immensely proud.

They are ... the most important postcards I have ever written, because they have the potential to change someone's life, even if only for a brief moment.

“They are, without question, the most important postcards I have ever written, because they have the potential to change someone's life, even if only for a brief moment.”

Desirée believes that, “whenever we have the opportunity to help another person, we should take it. Not only because offering comfort to someone who is suffering is the morally right thing to do, but because we should treat others as we ourselves would hope to be treated.”

And “if I one day grow old and spend my final years in a nursing home, I hope someone will write to me. If I were fighting to defend my country against an unjust invasion, sacrificing my youth and perhaps even my life, I would want to know that those sacrifices were not in vain. That they were seen, appreciated, and remembered by the international community. That they mattered enough for complete strangers, in a world that can so often seem indifferent, to sit down on the other side of the globe and write me a few heartfelt lines.”

When we asked Desirée “why do you think this work is important?” the first thing that came to her mind was a poem by Spanish poet Blas de Otero, “ME QUEDA LA PALABRA”.

“I thought this ‘because the word is the only thing they have left’ (to get solace). When facing a terrible and huge vital situation that escapes your control and that endangers your life (like war), only the word remains:

If I have lost my life, my time, everything
I cast away, like a ring, into the water;
If I have lost my voice in the thicket,
I still have the word.

If I have suffered thirst, hunger, everything
That once was mine and turned out to be
Nothing;
If I have mown down the shadows in
Silence,
I still have the word.

If I opened my lips to behold the pure and terrible
Face of my homeland;
If I opened my lips until they were
Torn apart,
I still have the word.

Desirée has not written any of her text in Ukrainian, “not because I think it is unimportant but because I would have had to trust an online translator for it. That would have been risky. English is not my mother tongue either, but I am fluent enough to be quite sure the meaning of my words in English show my Spanish thoughts loyally. In my opinion it was better to be exact in a third common language than to have a nice gesture in one I know nothing about and where I couldn’t be sure if the spirit was being respected.”

Going deeper into her choice of written language, Desirée explained that if she wrote in Ukrainian, she would have had to print her message as she is unable to write cursive using the Cyrillic alphabet.

“Under no circumstances was I going to sacrifice the two most personal parts of my contribution: the (precision of the) content – the core of what I want to say – and (part of) the ‘container/vessel’ (my handwriting).”

She worried about “doing it wrong” and she didn’t want to risk losing the essence of her message.

The use of a digital translator mean that she “would have to trust AI and hope blindly that both core (heart/meaning) and form (my transcription) were precise/decent. It was too important a message to be uncertain on both.”

Additionally, Desirée thinks “it’s beautiful for a language to be able to unite us all (without losing our own languages, the richness of our national selves, of course). During the Roman Empire it was Latin for us Europeans. Now it is English. A Spaniard and a Ukrainian can understand each other... neither in Spanish nor Ukrainian but in English! Not you, not me; neither black nor white but grey, sort of. It reminds me a little of Aristotle’s quote: ‘virtue lies in the golden mean’.”

Ultimately, Desirée hopes that Defenders feel less alone when they receive postcards from far away. “Not abandoned. [That they know that] we care for them. They awake our compassion, of course, and our admiration too.”

“*They awake our compassion, of course, and our admiration too.*”

When she learned of Russia’s full-scale invasion in early 2022, Desirée “couldn’t but think that it reminded me of Nazi Germany invading Poland in 1939. It was not just a question of no consideration or disrespect; it was an act of aggression that violated one of the most basic rules of Public International Law: the principle of the sovereignty of the State. A country can’t decide unilaterally that another country (or part of it) belongs to it. That is not the way things are done when abiding International Law (no referendum, no nothing).”

In times of desperation, such as when she was close to giving up her dream, Desirée has found consolation and inspiration from the following quote and text. “I want to pass them to the Defenders (in fact, now that I think of it, I will probably include them in my fourth batch of postcards):

If you can dream it, you can do it!

– Walt Disney

And,

The Royal Academy defines the word ‘impossible’ as something that lacks the ability or means to become reality or happen, and defines ‘improbable’ as something unlikely, not based on sound reasoning. Given the choice, I prefer improbability to impossibility. Like everyone else, I guess. Improbability hurts less and leaves room for hope, for heroism.

That David would defeat Goliath was improbable, yet it happened. That an African-American would live in the White House was improbable, yet it happened. That Barón Rojo would perform together again was improbable, yet it happened too. Nadal overtaking Federer as tennis world number 1. A journalist becoming princess first and queen later. Spain’s 12-1 victory over Malta.

Love, relationships, feelings, dreams – they are not based on prudent reasoning. That’s why I don’t like to speak of improbable loves but rather of improbable ones. Because THE IMPROBABLE IS, BY DEFINITION, PROBABLE. What is almost certain not to happen can still happen. And as long as there is a chance – half a chance in a billion – that it might happen, IT IS WORTH TRYING FOR.

– Off voice at the start of episode 97 on Spanish TV series “Paco’s Men”

Dear Defender, ... we remember you and we support you

By Helen

Suzanne and Steven live in Tennessee, USA. They have no family or other connections to Ukraine, though they did walk across the border from Romania some years ago for a ‘short’ visit in Ukraine.

“In my memory, at least, we spent almost as much time waiting at border checkpoints as we did in the country itself.”

Suzanne describes their days as calm having quit her job as a corporate lawyer after about 30 years. Though, she does consider a possible return in the future but in some other role.

“For now,” she shared, “I’m content doing volunteer work at a local clinic and also as a cook for Meals on Wheels.

Steven works as a hospice chaplain, which is his third or fourth career.

At the onset of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Suzanne and Steven felt anger. Not aware of any Ukraine-related volunteer organizations in their community, they tried to find ways to support the people of Ukraine.

“For us, that meant financial support. Sending money to people closer to the situation seemed like the best way to be helpful. We donated to a number of non-profits that were taking in supplies and food, or that were helping evacuate people in areas which were under attack. We still make monthly donations toward food and medical care.”

Steven has a long-standing tradition of decorating the front door of their home with string lights for Halloween, Christmas, and for parties. Shortly after the full-scale invasion, he decided to put up blue-and-



yellow string lights in support of Ukraine, leaving them on the door since.

“The lights remind people that the invasion is ongoing,” explained Suzanne, “and we still have people comment about them.”

In 2025, Suzanne saw a post in the [Postcrossing](#) forum about *Postcards to the Front*, and “knew right away that this was a project for which I had the time, materials, and interest to support. I sent my first batch of cards that week.”

Suzanne and Steven have since written more than 50 beautiful postcard messages of support for Defenders of Ukraine; many of them Suzanne’s own photographs.

“I choose cards that are colorful, cheerful, and are likely to have broad appeal,” she told us.

“Since I love natural beauty, I have a good number of postcards of flowers, scenery, and animals, and so the brightest ones of those are what I tend to choose for Defenders. I try to avoid cards that are dull, vintage, niche, American-patriotic, or potentially confusing from a cultural perspective.”



Not long after Suzanne joined Postcrossing, she found an online vendor that would print postcards from her photos and only had to order 2-4 cards of each image, keeping the quantity small and the variety large.

“I ordered an assortment of cards using photos I’ve taken on various trips or on hikes near here. Some of those are the colorful, friendly sort of images that I like to use for Defenders. ... As I didn’t take the photos specifically to write the postcards to Defenders, it doesn’t matter that I indicate on the card that I am the photographer for the postcard image.”

Like other postcard warriors, Suzanne has been a snail-mail fan her entire life, and has quite a collection of decorative stamps, stickers, and tapes.

“For decades, I’ve been teased, justifiably, for my tendency (read: *strong need*) to have things make a coherent whole. I want the tapes, stickers, stamps, and ink colors to coordinate. Even if the recipient doesn’t consciously notice, I think the cohesion makes the card feel better to the person reading it. In law, this tendency showed up in my insistence on having contracts that were well-organized, with plain wording, margins, fonts, headers, titles, and indexes that improved legibility.”

We *know-know* when a batch of Suzanne and Steven’s cards arrive in our mailbox without even checking for the Tennessee postal cancellation! Each envelope is handmade by Suzanne, sometimes out of paper that she has hand-marbled, “because the wonderful volunteers who handle postcard intake deserve to handle pretty things themselves.”

We are grateful for our good fortune in having a mailbox dedicated exclusively to human care and beauty! Lucky us!

When she first started to write postcards to Defenders, Suzanne tried Ukrainian phrases from the [phrase translation page](#) on the *Postcards to the Front* website.

“Later, I used an online translation tool to provide text that talks about our Ukraine blue-and-yellow string lights.”

Suzanne also writes weekly postcards to her elected representatives (American), “pleading with them to make choices that align with basic human rights and the United States Constitution. I tell myself that each one is a drop of water: it may be weak on its own, but they will add up and join other water drops and eventually we may make a powerful storm of change. Those postcards [to our representatives] are almost entirely ignored by the

recipients, and to date no representative has acted in line with any of my requests. It can be disheartening and it's never rewarding."

Further, Suzanne, believes, "the postcards that I contribute to *Postcards to the Front* are water drops for a different kind of rainfall. I see them as hopeful, supportive, and helpful *right now*. I *know* that they reach their intended audience. I *know* that they help. Knowing these things is a tonic for me after the dissatisfaction of writing to our political representatives."



I know that they reach their intended audience. I know that they help. Knowing these things is a tonic for me after the dissatisfaction of writing to our political representatives..

About her motivation for writing her cards almost entirely in Ukrainian now, Suzanne explained that she believes "it's easier for anyone to read a message if it's in their native language. I want these cards to be pure encouragement, not homework."

Of course, one cannot be sure what the actual effect of the postcards might be on Defenders; however, Suzanne and Steven hope "that they feel less isolated and more 'seen'. That's really all I'm trying to say in my messages: we remember you and we support you."

Suzanne prefers to not write such messages as 'keep fighting' or 'be brave', "because this is not my fight and I have no standing to tell them what to do or how to live. I just want them to know that people around the world care for them, support them, and wish them well."



I just want them to know that people around the world care for them, support them, and wish them well.

Where are you? - DETY Project to support Ukraine's children – Steve Ostafichuk Interview

By Helen

With family ties to Ukraine, present and dating back generations, Toronto resident Steve Ostafichuk has applied his decades long experience as an international researcher / recruiter focused on start-ups to several projects that he has taken on to support Ukraine.

We met Steve at a meeting of Canadian-Ukrainian community members in Oshawa, Ontario in early 2024 to explore ways in which we might jointly support Ukraine.

Since then, we have forged an informal active collaborative partnership linking community, postcards, and Ukraine, sharing what Steve describes as “a common vision and motivation: to right the grievous injustice of ruzzian aggression.”

Steve's dedication to Ukraine is grounded in family history; Russian oppression that includes the murder of his Uncle Gregory, a 19-year-old student, in summer 1941, and numerous relatives persecuted or killed.

Not mincing his words, there are “relatives recently killed by ruzzians. I have visited their graves.”

It's not complicated, as Steve notes, “for many in the Ukrainian diaspora to be involved in humanitarian fundraising, information distribution, political lobbying.”

It's personal. It's social justice.

In 2007, Steve returned to his Ukrainian community roots in Oshawa for an anniversary banquet at his community centre after thirty years away building his life and career. He heard “talk about selling the facility, as membership had significantly decreased and operations were running into a deficit, with major repairs looming.”

Steve decided.

“It was time to donate my time, funds and abilities to support our local and international Ukrainian causes.”

Steve took on administration of the local [Ukrainian] Dnipro Cultural Centre. After closure and sale of the centre, he became Chair of Dnipro Oshawa Fund which has donated more than \$1.2million for Ukrainian humanitarian projects [more than 30].

Some other projects included working as volunteer property manager at a children's summer camp undergoing major renovations during Covid lockdown, as well as organizing children's playday events at Camp Veselka in memory of his late wife, Adriana.

Steve also serves as Country Director, Ukrainian secure telemedicine with [Practice Innovators International Foundation \(PII\)](#) a US-based non-profit organization established to fund and resource humanitarian initiatives delivering Virtual Care for the Most Vulnerable anywhere, anytime.

A notable highlight about which we are familiar is the one-year sabbatical that Steve took from his work to develop a marketing and distribution project that supports [Ucrainica Research Institute](#). Work included development of the *Holodomor* exhibitions launched on the 75th anniversary of the *Holodomor*, the [Soviet] man-made famine in Ukraine (1932-33): "Holodomor: Genocide by Famine". Featured presentations include Parliament Hill in Ottawa, Queen's Park (Ontario Legislature) in Toronto, schools, libraries, and museums.

Project development for the exhibit included multimedia content such as the feature story of Konstantyn Bokan that chronicles the experiences and death of a young man during the *Holodomor*.

Postcards to the Front joined the *Holodomor National Awareness Tour* at the [Oshawa Museum in summer 2025](#). Visitors attended the multi-media presentation, then wrote postcard messages of support to Defenders of Ukraine.





Steve also has been co-writing a book with Stephan Bandera that chronicles shared family history, “What's in a name? Hryhoriy? Bandera?”.

It’s a story about two families, the Ostafichuk’s and the Bandera’s, bound by more than a century of history that is part of the greater story of Ukrainian diaspora communities that migrated to Canada from the late 1950's through the 1980's.

Intrigue, murder, escape, displacement, journey, arrival, and intergenerational trauma. Unique to each family, but also, as Steve reminds, “a common theme for first generation Canadians who escaped Soviet and German rule after World War Two.”

Steve tells us that the book is in the final editing stage, so ... stay tuned!

One particular event that occurred in Ukraine after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine had a momentous impact on Steve, as it did on many around the world: “the tragic bombing of the Mariupol Theatre (March, 2022) by the ruzzian Airforce, resulting in the mass murder of 600 people, mainly women and children taking shelter from bombings. The russian word for kids, ДЕТИ [DETY], was written on the pavement in front of the building, indicating that

"Kids" were sheltering in the theatre. Yet, a ruzzian jet dropped two 500-pound bombs on the building, destroying it and killing those inside."

The name DE TY carries a double meaning. Read in Ukrainian as «ДЕ ТИ?», it asks, "*Where are you?*" — a plea that speaks to absence, loss, and the search for children affected by war. At the same time, DETY comes from the Russian word «ДЕТИ», meaning "*children*", transliterated into Latin letters.

The horrific event led Steve to action, co-founding [DE TY Project](#), with the support of *Ucrainica Research Institute*, to draw attention to war crimes against children, to remind the world that the war in Ukraine is still happening, and to show international solidarity with the children living through wars around the world.

DETY reports that since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, "Russia's war has shattered families, erased cultural heritage and language, and inflicted deep physical and psychological trauma on a generation of children. Thousands have been displaced, deported, or forcibly separated from their families, while millions more continue to live under the constant threat of occupation and violence."

Since its founding, the DETY Project has transitioned from early public awareness campaigns, such as a [DETY / Where are you? flash mob](#), expanding into a broader platform for education and cultural engagement, bringing "together artists, educators, cultural institutions, and community members in Canada, the United States, Ukraine, and beyond. Driven by collaboration and volunteer effort, the Project develops educational initiatives, cultural performances, and public programs that help audiences understand how war affects children, families, and communities — fostering awareness, dialogue, and international solidarity."



This is where *Postcards to the Front* and Steve, through the DETY Project expand our collaborative partnership to support Ukraine.

We've already had the pleasure to work with Steve to facilitate postcard-writing at community events such as the *Holodomor National Awareness Tour*, as well as a unique collaboration with *Station Gallery* in Whitby for the opening of the exhibition, [Still in Time / The Prints of Jacques Hnizdovsky](#), with a parallel

exhibition running concurrently at Sens Bookstore in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Hnizdovsky was a Ukrainian-American artist whose artistic training was interrupted at the outset of the Second World War, but he found a place to continue his studies in Croatia. Attendees at the exhibition opening were introduced to Hnizdovsky's versatile explorations of figurative, flora and fauna motifs.

The opening was attended by students from Ivan Franko Ukrainian Heritage School (Oshawa) who wrote postcards to Defenders of Ukraine as well as to Ukrainian pilots in training, including cards designed by the students themselves (photo below on left).



We wrote about the event, [Jacques Hnizdovsky + Postcards](#), in March, 2025.

This autumn, *DETY Project* and *Postcards to the Front* are jointly launching a national educational initiative to foster awareness, dialogue and solidarity amongst students and youth, about Ukraine.

Starting with Greater Toronto Hamilton Area schools and local Ukrainian Heritage schools, churches, and youth organizations, the project will: promote awareness of children's rights and, specifically, about abducted Ukrainian Children; promote understanding and support of Ukrainian refugees as well as military at the front.

The goal is to expand the project nationally to 70 Ukrainian Heritage schools and to Ukrainian youth organizations across Canada.

Resources will be available to any educator or child/youth organization that would like to access them.

The curriculum will include an interactive classroom component employing resources such as the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), music, global awareness and support for Ukraine through postcard-writing to Defenders.

Educators will access *Postcards to the Front* educational resources including our interactive 3D [Postcard Constellation](#) that highlights stories from around the world. This exhibition is curated in the visual language of the night sky. Every postcard becomes a starlight, shining against the dark of night. The trails these lights leave behind illuminate a world otherwise smothered by the darkness of war. And each star represents a postcard warrior or others from all around the world who have connected with this project, with Ukraine. No story stands alone.

Trails animate postcard journeys. *Constellations* connect people and stories, illuminating commonalities. *Starlights* is a gallery of Defenders holding the [postcard] sources of light.

As Steve has written postcards to Defenders, he attests to the power of this aspect of the partnership as “it provides an immediate connection with supporters around the world with Defenders of Ukraine.”

Adding that each postcard offers “instant emotional gratitude for the Defenders, both emotional and psychological support that the world knows of them, that they are not alone. A simple act of kindness from strangers around the world.”

Steve travels to Ukraine occasionally with different projects and has seen and experienced firsthand how the war has impacted Ukrainians and their homeland. He believes that “passion, optimism and bloody determination will result in Ukraine prevailing against ruzzian aggression.”

Still, Ukraine needs help from her friends.

You, dear postcard warriors, are doing a tremendous job of sending messages of support and care to the front lines!

To our dear Tamara, at home base in Ukraine, Steve says, “next time I am in Kyiv, I’d love the pleasure of meeting Tamara.”

Report from Australia

By Gabbi

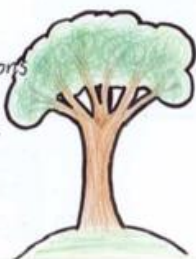
Kerry H. is a strong supporter of PTTF Australia. She manages our website, attends fairs as well as writes postcards. Kerry H. has been working with local primary school children, with strong support from the principal, to create postcards of hope for children in Ukraine. Kerry says the response from the school children was overwhelming:

Students wrote heartfelt messages of kindness and encouragement, accompanied by beautiful drawings in blue and yellow, often with splashes of Australiana — a touching reminder of the connection between children on opposite sides of the world.

The postcards were sent through *Postcards to the Front* to Voices of Children, a children's orphanage in Cherkasy, and defenders on the frontline in Ukraine. The impact was immediate. *Voices of Children* shared the postcards in a reel on their social media, describing them as "warm wishes from their peers from Australia". Recently, the children in Cherkasy sent postcards back to the students. Some were addressed personally to students who had included their names. Here are some examples of the Australian postcards sent and the replies from Ukrainian children:

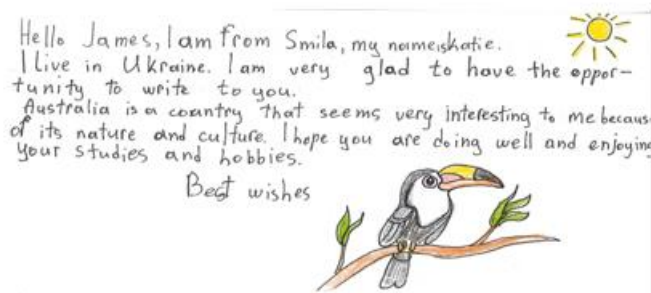


Dear Ukrainian Children,
I know it's hard right now
but there are peace negotiations
happening so don't give up. We
might see the end of this war
very soon.
From Isabella,
Point Lonsdale, Australia.



Dear Isabella ♡
Thank you so much for your kind letter and the
lovely drawing! Your support from Australia mea-
ns a lot to us and gives us hope. ♡
We have a few questions for you: ♡
• What is it like living in Point Lonsdale? ♡
• Do you often see kangaroos or other cool ani-
mals? ♡
We hope to hear from you again! ♡

I



For the students involved, it has been a powerful lesson that even small actions can make a meaningful difference. For the children in Ukraine, it is a reminder that they have not been forgotten. Sometimes hope really can fit inside a postcard.

Along with the postcards came a special handmade gift: a clay Cossack, created in the children's art room, proudly holding both the Ukrainian and Australian flags — a beautiful symbol of friendship, gratitude and connection between our two communities.

Final Word from Kerry H.:

At a time when the war in Ukraine continues to affect millions, these simple acts of kindness show the extraordinary power of human connection and the importance of standing together in hope.

If you would like to view more photos, [here](#) is the link.





Jane I., one of our supporters recently attended a *Red Thread* Quilt exhibition, in Sydney, and was thrilled to see that there were a few small quilts made by Ukrainians or on behalf of Ukraine. The Quilt exhibitions in Melbourne and Brisbane are still to be held, if interested.

Jane crafted a quilt and entered it into the exhibition. She refers to it as her *little contribution* and was thrilled to find that it was placed right in the middle of them!

Jane was moved by the exhibition, and also expresses how it makes her feel to support Ukraine as a postcard warrior; this feeling might resonate with many you:

It made me feel, as I write each time that "we are standing together with Ukraine", that I really was standing together with Ukraine!

House on the Hill



This quilt symbolises continuity of life and a feeling of hope within.

Keeper of Silence



This guardian offers inner protection and comfort in times of anxiety and overload.

A postscript from Charlie, the PTF Australia doggie featured in our last newsletter:

Charlie thanks all those who have contacted him for their good wishes and compliments

Honoured to Represent Ukrainian Culture at Pako Festa

By Kerry



Earlier this year, Geelong's vibrant [Pako Festa](#) once again transformed Pakington Street into a spectacular celebration of culture, diversity and community spirit. Known as Australia's largest free multicultural festival, the event brought together thousands of people from across Victoria to celebrate traditions from around the world.

Among the many proud cultural groups participating in the famous street parade was the [Association of Ukrainians in Victoria](#) – Geelong branch. I was deeply honoured to be invited to walk in the parade representing Ukraine, wearing traditional Ukrainian clothing and celebrating the rich heritage of this remarkable country.

Dressed in beautifully embroidered traditional attire, I joined fellow community members as we proudly marched through the streets of Geelong. The experience was both emotional and inspiring, as crowds gathered to cheer on the many cultural groups sharing their customs, music and traditions.

One of the most memorable parts of the celebration was wearing the vibrant **Malanka** (Malanka meaning bounteous evening) masks, which had been carefully handmade during workshops held the week before the festival. The colourful and expressive masks are an important part of Ukrainian folk tradition, symbolising celebration, storytelling and cultural identity. Wearing them during the parade added a joyful and authentic element to our presentation and attracted great interest from festivalgoers.

No cultural celebration would be complete without traditional food, and the delicious **varenyky** were a favourite throughout the day. The handmade Ukrainian dumplings, which I helped to make the week before, gave visitors a chance to experience authentic Ukrainian cuisine and provided a comforting reminder of home and heritage for many members of the Ukrainian community. They are so delicious I have become addicted to them!



For me, participating in the parade was far more than simply attending a festival — it was a meaningful opportunity to honour Ukrainian culture, connect with the community, hear the stories of families who journeyed from Ukraine to Australia following the invasion, and celebrate the beauty of multicultural Australia. Adding to the celebration were the incredible performers from the [Lehenda Dance Company](#), who proudly showcased the energy, passion and beauty of traditional Ukrainian dance throughout the parade.





News and Updates

By Helen

25,000 postcards!

This month we sent our 25,000th postcard to Ukraine, written by 14-year-old Natalia in Montreal. Thank you, Laryssa, with CYM Montreal for organizing youth at summer camp to write postcards to Defenders of Ukraine!

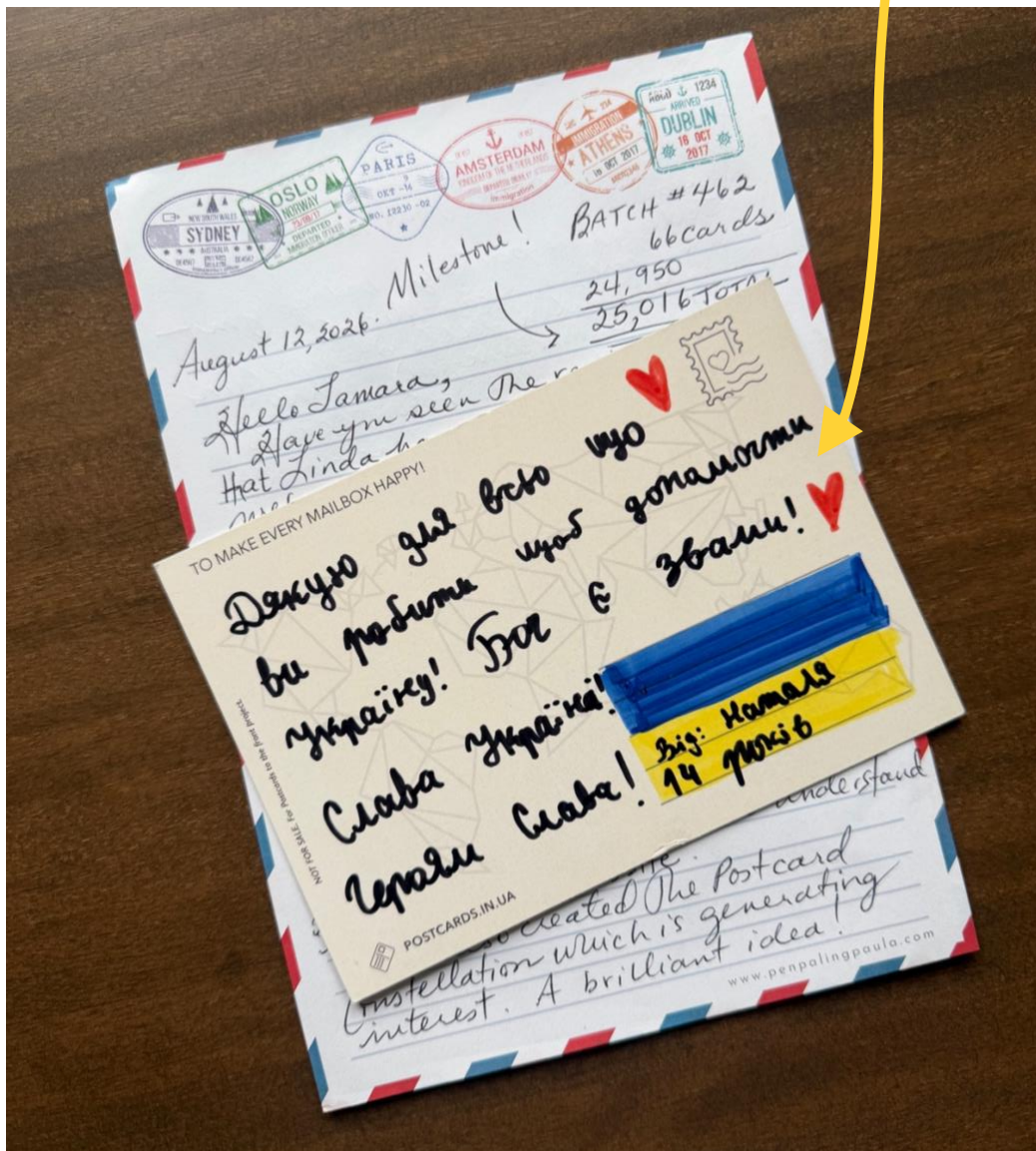


Figure: Our 25,000th postcard to Ukraine along with my letter communicating the milestone with Tamara of the home base.



Christmas in July Campaign

Thank you, all postcard warriors, for your contributions of care, hope and light for the upcoming winter holidays. As winter will approach too soon, it's important that we send Christmas greetings to Ukraine early so they are ready for distribution in December. Thank you for making the extra effort during the summer months!

Total to date: 800



FENPEX Fenelon Falls, Ontario

We were invited to bring postcards for Defenders to FENPEX 2026, the 40th annual stamp and coin show organized by the [Fenelon Stamp Club](#), Chapter 176 of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada.

Fenelon Falls is a lovely little town in southern Ontario located on the Trent-Severn Waterway. It's especially attractive to visitors during summer cottage season.

Our day with stamp and coin collectors reminded us of a similar day in September 2023 when we attended the [Eastern Ontario Postcard Show](#), in Merrickville, Ontario.

Thank you to the many visitors and dealers who wrote heartfelt supportive messages to Ukraine's Defenders, and who shared their stories with us.

Every written postcard has a story behind it about a family connection, about a neighbour who has been sheltering in Canada since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, about concerns related to overarching global issues and about the future.

After writing postcards with his father, on holiday from the Netherlands to visit family in Canada, one gentleman pulled up a photo on his cellphone. His story for us on this



day: his family has displayed a Ukrainian flag at the front of his home since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

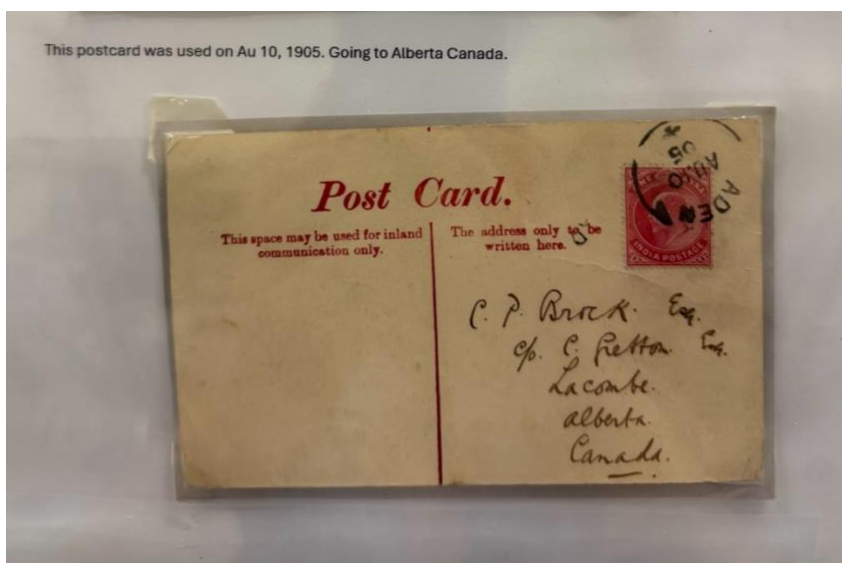


Figure left: Dutch father (left) on holiday in Canada visiting family.



Figure right: Photo on cell phone shows the son's home in Canada where he has flown the Ukrainian flag at his front door since the full-scale invasion.

There are many reasons for writing a postcard to a Defender. Every one of them boils down to basic human compassion.



One vendor had an interesting display of vintage postcards. Here's one sent August 10, 1905 to C.P. Brock in Lacombe, Alberta.

We got thinking ... these little pieces of human-to-human connection provide a glimpse to the past.

Imagine a Defender keeping your postcard beyond their days at the front lines.

Imagine that very postcard tucked away in a safe place is a reminder that someone from far away wrote words of care and support; desperately needed light during dark times.

Imagine your postcard offering the future such a glimpse of these times, and of your kindness to a stranger. *Say, 100 years from now!*



Canada's first official national *Ukrainian Heritage Month* – September 2026

After several years of effort and discussion, the Canadian Government passed [Bill S-210](#) declaring September each year national ***Ukrainian Heritage Month***.

What does this mean?

It's a symbolic recognition of the contributions of Ukrainian-Canadians to our nation-building project. Canadians can plan or engage in community events or exhibits such as at museums, libraries and in local public spaces, or do something personal/meaningful as an individual. Schools may choose to hold lessons or events during September.

Join our Ukrainian Heritage Month Challenge!

We invite you to join our ***Ukrainian Heritage Month challenge***. Every day, we'll post one idea on our [website](#) and on social media – [Instagram](#) / [Facebook](#) – that we ask you to consider as one way to celebrate/support Ukrainian history/culture/heritage. Most ideas will be postcard-related – of course – but there will be others.

Anyone can participate! *You don't have to be Canadian.*

1. **Ultimate Heritage Challenge:** one postcard per day during September. During the thirty days, try some of the postcard ideas we offer. **Prizes** will be drawn for three winners of the *Ultimate Heritage Challenge* who have *tried at least three of the ideas* that we've shared. We'll know because your cards will 'show' us. 😊

Deadline: we must receive your 30-day challenge package of postcards in our mailbox by **October 20**. If you think your *Ultimate Challenge* package will take longer than to get to us, let us know. After all, mail can take up to a month from faraway places. We'll hold off announcing the winners until all [known] packages arrive.

2. *Of course ... ! ...* gather with a group of family / friends / book club members / faith group / youth group / knitting club / motorcycle club to **write postcards** to Defenders. 😊
3. Ask your local library: what are they doing to celebrate *Ukrainian Heritage Month*? They hadn't thought of it? Offer to run a postcard-writing workshop. See our "[Run a Workshop](#)" feature on our *Practical Tools* page.
4. Contact your [Member of Parliament](#) indicating your support for Ukraine and ask them where they stand on Ukraine. Invite them to write a postcard to a Defender.
5. Ask your favourite radio station to play something that celebrates Ukrainian music / music history.
6. Tell at least 3 people about Ukraine, about why you support Ukraine, and offer suggestions about how they can help. We have a few right here. 😊
7. Try a Ukrainian recipe. Borscht is perfect in September as beets are freshly harvested. Here's one, [Baba's recipe](#), but there are sooooo many other delicious Ukrainian dishes ... why not try a different one every day?! You could probably make 30 iterations of borscht throughout September!
8. Learn about [Ukrainian embroidery patterns](#), and maybe try some! Like postcard warrior [Laura from Saskatchewan](#) did, embroidering traditional Ukrainian



patterns on her stunning Saskatchewan landscape postcards!

9. Buy Ukrainian. Support a Ukrainian business or a business in Canada that shares profits for humanitarian or other support for Ukraine. Here are some Ukrainian postcard shops that you can buy from: [Zolota Ptakha](#), [PostalUkraine](#), [UA Postcards](#) which also offers [Postcards for a Purpose](#), where you can buy a postcard to be written to a Russian embassy or consulate, one for the *Hospitals and Healing* project, or send one to a US leader, among other options. If you like stamps ... [UkrPoshta](#) produces stamps that tell the story of Ukraine since the invasion, in real time. The Snake Island *standoff* is a pretty popular issue.
10. Share your ideas and ways in which you celebrate *Ukrainian Heritage Month* by email. Tag us on Instagram, Facebook, Threads. We'd love to share your stories with others.
11. Take photos of your gathering or event or of you writing postcards or cooking borscht or learning embroidery or whatever you decide to do and share them on social media to feature your way of celebrating Ukrainian Heritage Month. Don't forget to tag us!
12. Find a reputable charity to donate to and be sure to let them know that you are donating in honour of *Ukrainian Heritage Month*. Perhaps your faith group sponsors a Ukrainian family sheltering in Canada or raises funds for medical supplies? We are certain that the [Canada Ukraine Foundation](#) would welcome your support.
13. Concerned about children in Ukraine struggling through the war, or children who have been orphaned or abducted by Russia? See how you can support [DETY Project](#), an international awareness initiative focused on the impact of war on Ukrainian children.

Other ideas? Please tell us about them! We'll share ...

IG / Threads: @postcardstothefront_canada

Tags: #ukrainianheritagemonth #standwithukraine #canadaukraine
#postcardstothefrontcanada #postcardstothefront

Email us with images and we'll share: postcardstothefront.canada@gmail.com



More cards arrive at the front lines



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!



Please continue to tell others about this project. Ask family and friends to write cards. Involve your children and grandchildren. Defenders especially value postcards with drawings from children.

Not sure how to get started? Go to our [Practical Tools](#) page where we have tips and “how to” get started. Check our [Ukrainian phrases](#) page.

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

Follow us on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#)



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 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 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 [here](#). Thank you!

If you want to hear Ukrainian phrases, we now have a [Ukrainian phrasebook](#), Ukrainian phrases you can hear.

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.
I wish you health and victory.	Бажаю тобі здоров'я і перемоги.
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.
Be strong and stay safe.	Будьте сильними та бережіть себе.
Stay till the end! (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.
Canada stands with you.	Канада ЗА вас.
I wish you a victory.	Бажаю вам перемоги.
Bless Ukraine.	Благослови Україну.
With love, (at the end of the letter)	З любов'ю,



Thank you for your continued support of Defenders of Ukraine!