

The whole 'pen being mightier than the sword' thing is perhaps defensible, but is the power of language greater than that of a hypersonic cruise missile or a drone packed with high explosive? Maybe the following words will help you decide.



A friend living in Ethiopia's Tigray province e-mailed me: "I read about "In The Trenches" and about a wonderful woman, Elena, and both touched my heart deep down and hope one day Ukraine will retain its serenity and recover and enjoy peace, stability and sustainable development." This from a man who suffered greatly during the 2022 war in his region, a conflict which reportedly cost the lives of 600,000 people, nearly all civilians. And yet room remains in his heart for Ukraine.

Texting with a drone commander on Ukraine's front line, I asked him to confirm the shipping address for some equipment I was having sent to his unit. His absolutely casual reply was "That post office has already been destroyed. I'll give you the details of another one."

I was corresponding with an editor about placing a paid ad for "In The Trenches" in "Ukrainian People" magazine, which serves readers in the US and Canada. After some to-ing and fro-ing, she replied: "Sorry for the misunderstanding. We do not charge for articles about charity and brave people like you...I am very grateful to you for helping Ukraine and your contribution to bringing our Victory closer. Thanks to people like you, we have hope that this world, our planet will not perish in the fire of wars, but will become a better place to live. We will place your article in the October issue."

Finally, let me leave you with a poem from a Ukrainian Facebook connection of mine, which perfectly captures the oddness of life in wartime:

Well before
dawn the alert
serves as alarm.
I confuse
the fridge's hum
for drones

or some more
sinister incoming.
But nothing.
The pink horizon-
line view
from the balcony
before sunrise
is spectacular.
Stars twinkling:
one huge reddish
one due east
might be something
else, or just
Mars, I think.

Chris

www.inthetrenchesukraine.org