



*Training of Ukraine recruits by Australian soldiers includes sessions on trench warfare. Image by HANDOUT/AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE*

• **POLITICS**

# Australia adds firepower to Ukraine military training.

Jacob Shteyman and Andrew Brown

January 8, 2024

Nearly 100 Australian defence force members will help train Ukraine military personnel to assist the nation in its conflict with Russia.

Members of Adelaide’s Ukrainian community gathered at RAAF Base Edinburgh to show their gratitude to 90 members of the 7th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment who will fly to the UK as part of the latest round of military assistance.

Four rotations have involved nearly 300 troops taking part in the military training of Ukraine forces in groups of 70.



*A ceremony was held at RAAF Base Edinburgh in Adelaide before the soldiers left for the UK. Image by Jacob Shteyman/AAP PHOTOS*

An expansion of Operation Kudu will result in rotations increasing to 90 members at a time throughout 2024.

At a farewell ceremony on Monday, Brigadier Tim Orders reminded the soldiers of the importance of their mission.

“Be proud that your efforts will not only strengthen our coalition’s resolve, but uphold the values of democracy and peace throughout the world,” Brigadier Orders told the troops.

“Your presence signifies hope and solidarity in a time of need.”

The brigade received a blessing from a Ukrainian Orthodox priest and a choir wearing traditional vyshyvankas – the national Ukrainian dress – sung a patriotic hymn in its honour.

Frank Fursenko, president of the Association of Ukrainians in South Australia, said the Australian government supporting their compatriots back home was extremely significant for the Ukrainian community.

“The war has had a devastating impact, regardless of whether they live in Ukraine or in the diaspora,” he told reporters.

Acting Defence Minister Matt Thistlethwaite paid tribute to members of the Ukrainian community who came to farewell the Australian soldiers.



“It’s an important symbol of the solidarity that exists between the people of Australia and the people of Ukraine and our two militaries,” he said.

Mr Thistlethwaite said the ADF was performing an important role as the two-year anniversary of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine loomed.

“The training that our soldiers are providing to Ukrainian infantry men and women is making a difference,” he said.

“And we’re seeing that on the ground in Ukraine with the great job that the Ukrainian military are doing defending their homeland.”

Australian instructors will mainly conduct training in urban and forestry environments.

A small number will participate in a young leaders program, training the next generation of the Ukrainian military, Mr Thistlethwaite said.

Since January 2023, Australian soldiers have trained more than 1200 Ukrainian troops as part of a multinational training missions.

Defence personnel from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Romania, Norway and Sweden have been involved in the training effort since June 2022.



*Acting Defence Minister Matt Thistlethwaite and Brigadier Tim Orders said Australia backs Ukraine. Image by Jacob Shteyman/AAP PHOTOS*

Mr Thistlethwaite said Australia would continue to support Ukraine’s fight against Russia’s invasion.

“Australia has been involved in providing about \$910 million worth of support to Ukraine,” he said.

“This is an illegal and unprovoked invasion that Russia undertook and Australia’s been one of the largest non-NATO supporters of the efforts of the Ukrainian military to resist.”

As the war drags into its third year, growing “Ukraine fatigue” among Western countries threatens to damage the Ukrainian war effort, which is heavily reliant on foreign military support.

Mr Fursenko said it is important to keep reminding people the war was ongoing.

“Although the war in Ukraine is not on the front pages ... we are very confident that we still have the support of the vast majority of the Australian people,” he said.