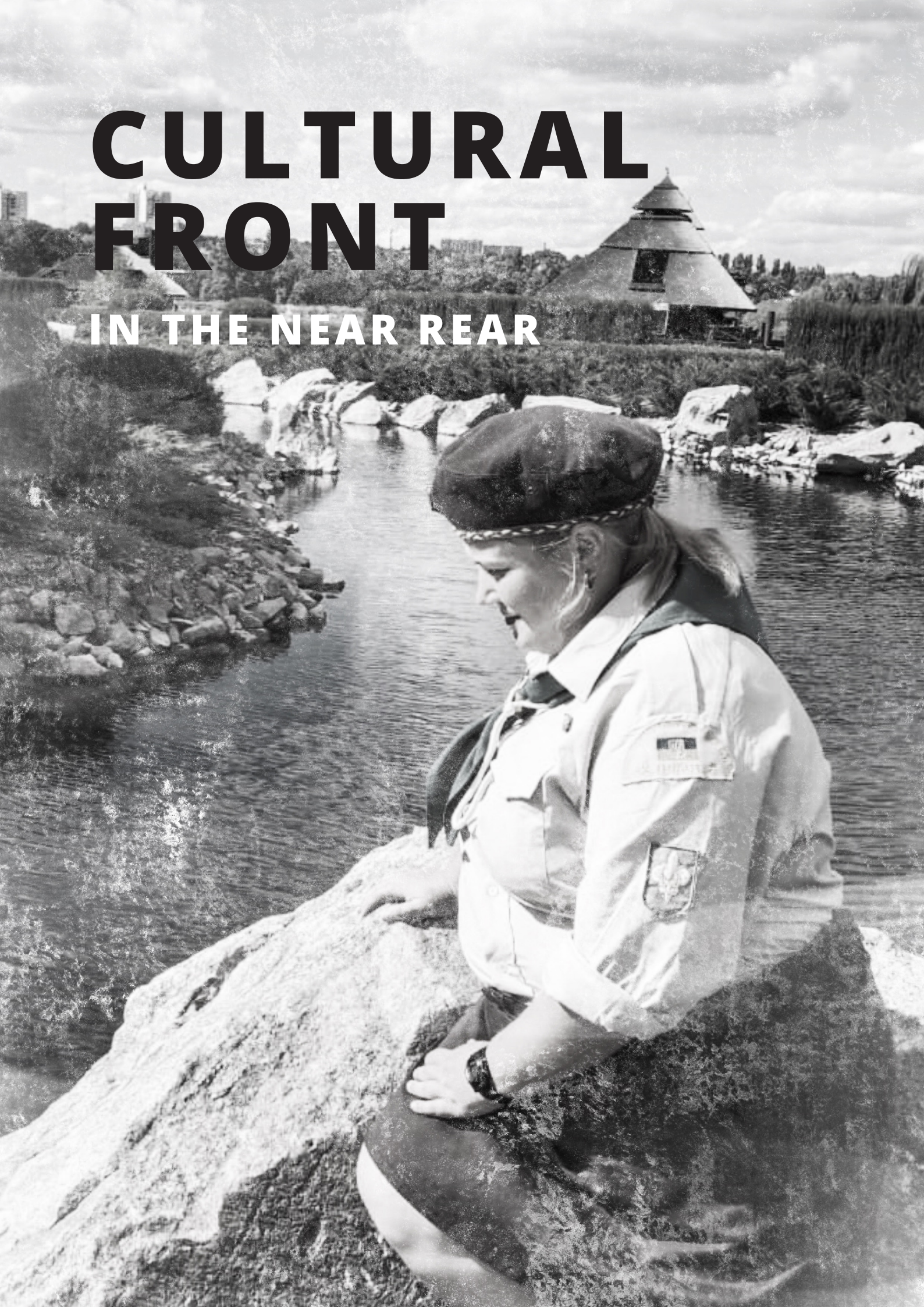


CULTURAL FRONT

IN THE NEAR REAR



So, about the cultural frontline. Or how the culture is holding up.

The beginning of the Russian-Ukrainian war caught me in Chuhuiv. At that time I was a researcher at the Repin Art Memorial Museum. Unsurprisingly, this museum complex has a local history department. That's where I worked successfully combining archeology, pedagogy and a bunch of everything else that unites employees of small museums throughout Ukraine. So, 2014 it was. Military town in Kharkiv region. Crimea. Then Ilovaisk. Debaltseve and all the horrors we were not ready for. As part of the preparations for the Day of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, if I'm not mistaken, in 2014 or 2015, we decided to prepare an exhibition. There were posters on military themes, children's letters, shell casings of various calibers, themed souvenirs... But the main thing that was there was the basis for the camouflage net. The idea was that that all visitors could get involved engaging in its production and thus the victory would be common and everyone would be involved in it. Oh, then it seemed that the victory was close... And it's been 8 years since...

So, Anti-terrorist Operation first, and Joint Forces Operation later. All this time I was involved in museum, archeology, and promotion.

Gradually, the Chuhuiv page of my life came to an end and the Dnipro part began. There was also a museum, archeology, promotion. Not at the regional, but at the national museum level. Somewhere between 2018 and 2019, I got involved in Plast (Interpreter's note: Ukrainian scout organization), and patriotic education with it.

On February 24, I was in Dnipro. The first day passed in complete uncertainty. The only thing was that a lot of subscriptions to Telegram channels were added, and about a week later I added "Dnipro. Alarm" channel. But on February 25 I went to work. I live on the left river bank, the museum is on the right. The minutes we rode across the bridge seemed like a lifetime. Everyone was uncertain. But on the first day, colleagues disassembled the main part of the exhibition. More precisely, the most vulnerable part of it: precious metals, organic archaeological funds. But there was still plenty of work on the next days and a week later. The dismantling of the exposition in the hall was accompanied by attempts to secure the street exposition. It would seem first that nothing could threaten the boulders that lasted 5 or 3 thousand years. But rockets were flying. Therefore, there were fewer and fewer questions about the need for such measures.

AND THEN THE MUSEUM OF MARIIA PRYIMACHENKO BURNED DOWN. **AND THEN A ROCKET DESTROYED A SKYTHIAN WOMAN (SCULPTURE) IN IZIUM.**

And our "oldwomen" were still covered with sandbags. During one of the rocket attacks on the Dnipro, the ceiling in the archeology hall was destroyed, and we dismantled the part of the exposition that still existed.

Of the four employees of the archeology department in the city, I was left alone...

At the same time, I got involved in volunteering: packing trucks with humanitarian aid, collecting of fabrics for camouflage nets, sorting, packing. There was so much of it...

The first days there was a belief that the war would end in a week, well, in a month... And it would end with our victory. February came to an end, followed by March. And the war did not end. I remembered that I was a museum worker. I suggested to the deputy director to restore some educational programs at the museum. It turned out that many colleagues had the same thoughts. So we decided to return to the classes at the museum. The question was where to have them. We couldn't do it neither at the exhibition halls, nor at the warehouses. I had the first class in my own office. But there were huge windows. And so we as a team came up with the idea to organize a museum hub. We identified a semi-basement in which the expositions of Anti-terrorist Operation were held until February 24. The head of the corresponding department re-joined the Army, and the researcher went back to volunteering.

Since then we've been offering classes, giving interviews on TV, talking about culture, but it seemed like not enough. It's never enough for a true enthusiast. So we've added an archeological exhibition and constant excursions. And we had an opening of another one planned!

WE HELD THE NIGHT OF MUSEUMS. I GAVE A LECTURE ON ARCHEOLOGY DURING THE WAR AND A MASTER CLASS THERE.

All these events show that people missed culture, art, just talking about something other than war. And I'm ready to give them everything!

Back in the winter of 2020-2021, I started making epoxy resin jewelry. Now I sell them and, of course, donate all the money to the volunteers I know. I don't know how much money I've already earned. It was hard to count. But no matter how many, they were not enough for our victory! So I continue and will not stop! There is also time and energy for creativity during the war. Otherwise one can go nuts (as I was writing this, I heard shelling. There were no sirens, so I supposed our Army were bombing Russian occupiers).

And then, on the first day after the Victory, we will restore the exhibition halls, have archeological expeditions, decorate ourselves with earrings and jewelry, wear our best embroidered shirts and hug everyone who returned home or never left. We'll travel to visit Kharkiv, Mariupol, damn it, we'll even go to the sea shore in Henichesk! And we will build and share our stories!

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Dnipro