

*Щиро дякуємо нашим дорогим друзям із Великої Британії, очолюваним нашим другом і колегою Андрієм Варвінським, який з перших днів цієї страшної війни завжди поруч із нами, українцями!*

*Ваша допомога та підтримка дуже важлива для нас!*

*І ті посилки з медичними препаратами, витратними матеріалами й унікальними реанімаційними пристроями зберегли життя багатьом нашим захисникам, героям ЗСУ!*

*Дякуємо Вам від щирого серця!*

*Проф. О. Тарабрін*

## MEDICAL HUMANITARIAN HELP FOR UKRAINIAN COLLEAGUES

*"I WILL NOT PERMIT considerations of age, disease or disability, creed, ethnic origin, gender, nationality, political affiliation, race, sexual orientation, social standing or any other factor to intervene between my duty and my patient."*

*The Declaration of Geneva (2017)*



On the 24th of February 2022, I wrote on social media: "This is the saddest day of my life. I never thought I will live to the day to see the war in Europe. I condemn any war but particularly the one where two former brother nations are dragged into the conflict. There will be blood, there will be casualties, there will be irreversible consequences for both countries and peoples. My Ukrainian friends, colleagues and my relatives living there, today my heart and my prayers are with you."

The whole world was shaken by the invasion of Ukraine and naturally wanted to help. If you are an established humanitarian organisation with resources, it is a relatively straightforward task. But what can an individual do to help colleagues, in my case medical colleagues?

Fortunately, for the past 18 years, I have been involved in the activities of the European Society of Anaesthesiology and Intensive Care (ESAIC), as a member and then a Chair of the ESAIC Examination Committee and also as an Examiner of the European Diploma in Anaesthesia and Intensive Care (EDAIC). This meant collaborating with col-

leagues in all European countries, visiting different exam centres, and presenting at national congresses. Colleagues from Ukraine were part of this circle and via an educational platform Medvoice ([www.medvoice.net](http://www.medvoice.net)), I was given an opportunity to present educational and professional topics online and in person mainly in Odessa and Dnipro. We were setting up a Difficult Airway Course in Kiev in April 2022, sharing lectures and workshops between Ukrainian and UK colleagues for around 500 participants. Unfortunately, this course had to be abandoned until better times.

Instead, Ukrainian colleagues urgently switched to treating multiple casualties, unfolding mobile hospitals, converting civil vans into mini ambulances and more. They knew what they were lacking, I knew them. All we needed was to obtain medical items, figure out how to fund the purchase and to transport the goods to Ukraine.

As my JustGiving fundraising account was already in place, I promptly created a new page with an ambitious goal of £10,000. You would not believe how quickly that goal was reached with my colleagues, friends, social media contacts, and their friends donating! Donations ranged from just £5 to £1000! In no time the necessary funds were collected to purchase tourniquets, antihemorrhagic bandages, cannuli, oral/nasal airways, self-inflating bags, pneumothorax needles, backpacks, high-calorific food packages, etc.

My hospital procurement officers pointed me in the direction of their supply companies, and I also found many others online. I cannot list them here, but all gave considerable discounts the minute it was mentioned it was for Ukraine. My garage, attic, and under-the-stairs space soon turned into storage units.

What now? Post by Royal Mail, DHL, or other parcel companies? Pricy and slow. Drive my car to Ukraine myself? Possible, but not very efficient in terms of how much can be taken on board. By then I had joined several groups dedicated to helping Ukraine, and through one of them (Help Ukraine in Exeter) found that a local ambulance company owner, Scott Cheadle, was driving one of his ambulances all the way into Ukraine as opposed to the Polish border (as was often where such trips ended). I reached out to Scott, and he was delighted to take my pallets all the way to western Ukraine where my local colleagues retained some, but also shipped to other units and hospitals to the east and south of the country. Scott and I became good friends and continue our cooperation to the present day.

Later, a charity called Christian Response contacted me offering their help. They have been helping Moldova for the past 30 years driving a 40-ton truck several times per year to this country on the border with Romania on one side and Ukraine on the other. The space and the weight of deliveries through them were not an issue, and so it became possible to deliver much-needed supplies to the newly formed mobile hospital that was being assembled near Odessa.

A southwest-based company called Diamedica were extremely helpful and generous, responding to our call for aid for Ukraine. They make very inexpensive yet simple and portable anaesthetic machines (Glostavent DPA03) that fit into a 14 kg suitcase and can be used in the middle of the jungles or on the battlefield. Many years ago, as an SHO in Anaesthetics at the Gloucester Royal Hospital, I was involved in the design and publication of the first prototype of such a machine. Diamedica was so generous in sponsoring me via their charity "Safe Anaesthesia Worldwide", and also gave a massive discount to enable us to purchase two machines, a portable ventilator, and an oxygen concentrator. These items are now being used to give safe anaesthesia to casualties on the battlefields of Ukraine.

Due to COVID-19, the storage units of my hospital were full of PPE that were approaching their shelf-life and were due to be destroyed. So, several tons of them found good use in several hospitals across Ukraine. They were transported by the above-mentioned contacts but also by Ukrainians who have lived in the UK for many decades and who started their own private deliveries using their minivans, 4x4s, etc. I have come across so many established and newly formed charities both locally, nationally, and internationally such as World Extreme Medicine, Medics4Ukraine, Canada Way, Ukrainian Action and others. This work still goes on.

On the educational level, we have managed to organise several presentations with leading European specialists, such as Professors Paolo Pelosi, Javier Belda and Zek Alanoglu, presenting on topics related to mass casualties, ventilation strategies and more. Utilising my knowledge of languages, I acted as facilitator. More topics were presented at the traditional Pearl of the Black Sea meeting in Odesa in September, led by Professor Oleg Tarabrin who is heavily involved in Continuous European Education in Anaesthesia (CEEA) Courses that are still running despite this unjust war.

The courage of my Ukrainian colleagues is simply overwhelming, and no words can describe the types of casualties they have to deal with on a daily basis. I know this all too well, helping them occasionally with my professional advice. Sadly, this war is not over yet and far from the end I am afraid. Therefore, do let me know if you are willing to help in any way and I shall gladly let you know how you can get involved. Every little help is so important to those colleagues in Ukraine who treat military and civilian casualties every day and risk their lives too. They are part of the fight for their country's freedom, for the world without wars and tyranny.

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