

As Ukraine War Outlasts World War I, Author Revisits the Country She Photographed at Peace

Author Gini Graham Scott returns to photographs she took in 1980s Ukraine, homeland of her grandparents, as the war passes the length of the First World War.

SAN RAMON, CA, UNITED STATES, June 23, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On June 11, 2026, the war in Ukraine reached its 1,569th day, officially outlasting the First World War, which ran 1,568 days. For author Gini Graham Scott, the milestone carried a personal weight. It sent her back to the late 1980s, when she traveled through Ukraine at a time of peace, camera in hand, retracing the homeland her grandparents had left in the early 1900s.



Kyiv, Ukraine, photographed by Gini Graham Scott during her travels in the late 1980s.

Those trips became a book, *When Ukraine Was at Peace: A Photographic Memoir*, a collection of more than 200 photographs of ordinary Ukrainian life during the Gorbachev years of glasnost and perestroika. Now, as the war grinds past another grim marker, Scott has returned to the work and added a new reflection on what that lost world means today.

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“I feel especially connected to what is happening in Ukraine, since my grandparents on my father's side lived there before emigrating to the United States,” Scott said. “When I read that the war had now lasted longer than World War I, I found myself thinking back to the peaceful country I saw, and the people who welcomed us into their homes.”

Scott's photographs capture Ukraine not as a battlefield but as a place where people simply lived. Families gathered at home. Children played in sunlit parks. Vendors arranged produce at open-air markets. Couples strolled city streets, and crowds stretched out on the beach by the Dnieper River. The buildings in the background, ornate tsarist facades, Soviet apartment blocks, and golden Orthodox domes, are the same kinds of structures that have since appeared in news coverage of the war.

Her connection to the country runs through her own family. Traveling on citizen-diplomacy trips, Scott stayed in Ukrainian homes, shared family-style meals of lamb, beef, and fresh bread, and formed friendships that lasted years, including one with a young journalist named Alex who introduced her group to a brand-new invention he was excited about: email. Standing on the shore of the Dnieper, she felt a strong sense of connection to the grandparents who had come from that land.

"Looking back, it seemed like a time of great possibility," Scott said. "The country was just opening up, and the people we met were full of hope. It is heartbreaking to see what has happened since, and yet Ukraine's endurance against far greater odds seems to draw on that same spirit I witnessed all those years ago."

The new edition pairs Scott's original photographs with her present-day reflection, offering readers both a portrait of a vanished moment and a meditation on what peace looked like before the war, and what its people are fighting to reclaim.

When Ukraine Was at Peace: A Photographic Memoir is [available now on Amazon](#). Scott also shares her ongoing reflections on Ukraine and other subjects on her [Substack](#) newsletter.

Gini Graham Scott, Ph.D., is the author of more than 50 books with major publishers and has published some 200 titles through her company, Changemakers Publishing and Writing. She writes books, proposals, and film scripts, and has produced feature films and documentaries. She is based in San Ramon, California.

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