



CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 161/07 |
| 2. Advertiser | Defence Force Recruiting Organisation (RMC Duntroon) |
| 3. Product | Employment |
| 4. Type of advertisement | TV |
| 5. Nature of complaint | Discrimination or vilification Nationality – section 2.1 |
| 6. Date of determination | Tuesday, 12 June 2007 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement opens on the Rising Sun badge then zooms to reveal the badge on the hat of an Australian soldier in the trenches at Gallipoli, then an Australian Light Horse regiment on horseback. A male voiceover announces "Throughout history, we've risen to the challenges that have confronted us, under a Rising Sun".

A graphic appears reading "Whatever the challenge". Various military scenarios follow: an Army soldier shaking hands with an aboriginal Army officer in WWII Egypt; Australian soldiers walking up a mountain in New Guinea during World War II; Army soldiers waiting to jump on board a Huey helicopter, surrounded by mates; and soldiers standing around outside a tent sharing a joke. The camera zooms into the Rising Sun badge on the uniform of a soldier clearing mines then zooms out to reveal the Rising Sun badge stitched onto the arm of a current day Australian soldier in Pakistan being blown by the downdraft of helicopter blades. Australian soldiers are shown unloading a Chinook helicopter in Pakistan, a female soldier is seen hosing down the underside of an Army Land Rover and soldiers handing out bottled water in Bandah Aceh.

Another graphic reads "Whatever the adversity". Scenarios following include ASLAV's in the streets of Baghdad; an Army nurse and a young girl in Pakistan; an Army doctor treating a baby in Pakistan; an Army nurse loading a child on board a Blackhawk helicopter; and a close up of an Army doctor walking out of the makeshift tent he was operating in, looking elated and proud of his efforts. A shot is shown of an Army Engineer surveying a site in Iraq with a theodolite as another soldier holds a surveyors staff. Further scenes show a female soldier looking skyward; a wide shot of soldiers abseiling down a cliff and a shot of flattened buildings following a Cyclone.

The next graphic reads "Whatever the need" and shows scenes of Army carpenters carrying a length of timber, and hammering in gangnails on the length of timber; soldiers patrolling a road in the Solomons and soldiers running and taking cover in Timor.

The next graphic reads "Whatever challenge lies ahead" and shows an officer giving a soldier orders in Timor; soldiers playing in a Rugby match in Iraq with one of the players bending over laughing and looking exhausted as a mate pats him on the back as he walks past. A female comms technician is seen working with her team to set up a satellite dish in Afghanistan, plugging in cables of the satellite system as another soldier is seen in an Army 6x6 Land Rover full of comms gear. Another Army soldier is shown handing out sweets and lollies to local children in Timor as another group of soldiers carry a civilian on a stretcher along a track.

The final graphic reads "Whatever the commitment" showing an Army officer leading a group of soldiers as the Rising Sun badge is shown on a graduating soldier's slouch hat and another soldier stands to attention as the camera zooms in on the Rising Sun badge on his/her slouch hat. The concluding shot reveals the Rising Sun crest from the Army logo.

A 15-second version of the advertisement shows footage from an RMC graduation ceremony in the 1920s and the present day. A male voiceover announces "Since 1911 the Royal Military College Duntroon has trained its officers with leadership qualities to prepare them for any challenge. With just 18 months training you too can become a leader on the world stage." The Rising Sun of the Army crest is shown.

THE COMPLAINT

A sample of comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

The first sentence of the voice over states "Throughout history, we've faced the challenges under a rising sun". Considering that the Japanese national flag is the Rising Sun, I find it offensive that the defence organisation should use such provocative wording in the Ad, especially as world war 2 has (last I checked) been resolved and we have Japanese immigrants living in Australia peacefully.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complaint/s regarding this advertisement included the following:

Defence Force Recruiting has embarked on the development of a values-lifestyle campaign for the Army that drives greater emotional connection with the service. For the past 100 years, Army values have been at the heart of every Australian Soldier, no matter where they have served. What this commercial does is clearly demonstrate the values, through footage depicting the various periods of military history. What binds these values together is one of the true icons of Australian history – the Rising Sun badge, which forms the link between soldiers of the past and the modern day Australian Soldier.

The advertisement aims to demonstrate the interesting and rewarding nature of the work the Army does, showing the sense of community, teamwork, camaraderie and mateship in the Army and shows that a life in the Army is still 'normal' with time for fun and socialising. Just as importantly we encapsulate the heritage and tradition the Army is founded on and convey how the Army of today carries on a tradition steeped in the core values of Courage, Initiative and Teamwork.

The Army values-lifestyle television campaign will launch w/c 8 April and air in all major metropolitan and regional areas nationally. The campaign will utilise a top-tail strategy, airing the 60 second Army commercial and a 15 second Royal Military College (RMC) commercial in the same advertisement break.

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board ("Board") considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the "Code").

The Board noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement vilified Japanese people by referring to the 'rising sun'. The Board considered that the reference to the rising sun was reference to the Rising Sun Badge used by the Australian Army and not to Japan the Japanese people or Japanese soldiers. The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach section 2.1 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.