

# Explore – Research, think, do

## Exploration 3 – Checking your own understanding

- Use the Australian Red Cross brochure ‘**Protect this emblem because it protects lives**’ to answer the overview questions
- Name **five categories of businesses/products** that tend to misuse the red cross most often.
- What is the **correct** symbol for **First Aid** (and First Aid related products) in Australia?



- What misunderstanding did Jodi Paterson admit to when she developed designs for her Sweet Lilly cosmetic/medicine bags?
- Is it acceptable to use a red cross on a **doctor’s surgery**, say if it is tilted over to the side with a thin black line around it? Why or why not? What is the test?

- Discuss:

Australian Red Cross contacts companies who misuse the red cross. The idea certainly not to be punitive but to educate them. The vast majority of misuses arise simply because those designing **company logos and advertisements** did not know the law. Is the education that Red Cross is involved in **important work**? Why or why not? Does misuse of the emblem matter in peacetime? Why or why not?

- Watch:

The four-minute **video** ‘**Red cross emblem: the power to protect**’ on <https://youtu.be/sKislApv9Wk>

## Auditing your school and community

The red cross emblem has a very particular meaning: 'Don't shoot'. Its message is simple: Don't target this person, site, vehicle and so on, because **it is providing neutral and humanitarian assistance in times of war.**

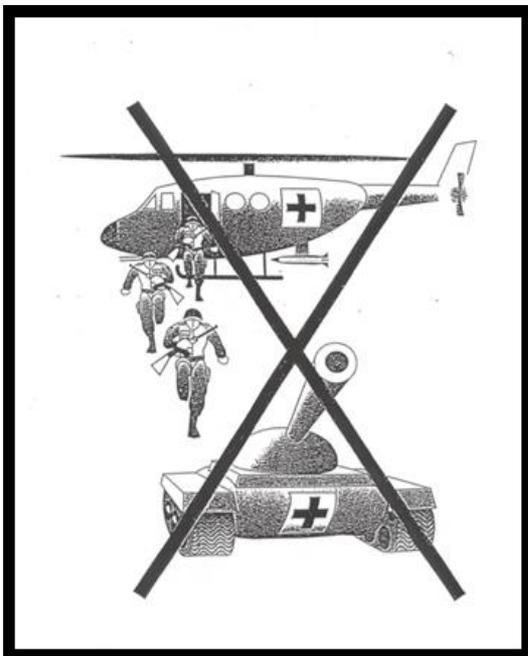
How many Australians know this?

- **Devise a short questionnaire** with five questions, likely with multiple choice answers. As a class, decide on the best questions to draw out people's understanding of the emblem –  
  
what it does and doesn't mean, how it should and shouldn't be used.
- Decide the number of your fellow school students you will need to poll to get a **representative sample**. Is it adequate to only survey those in the secondary school age range? Who else might you include?
- Do an audit of your school. Are the **First Aid kits and the sickbay correctly marked** in your school? If not, act on it – give the person in charge a copy of the brochure.
- You could also look for any misuses in your local shops, and report any to Australian Red Cross.
- Having conducted your polls and audits, assess how much Australians appear to know about the meaning of the red cross emblem.
- A media/communications class might undertake to **design an education campaign** around the school, and re-test the poll results afterwards.



## Deliberate misuse of the emblem in war = Perfidy

Deliberate misuse of the emblem during armed conflict is a **war crime**.



In May 2011 reports emerged from Libya that [former] President Gaddafi had used **helicopters with red cross/red crescent markings to drop sea mines into the harbour of the besieged city of Misrata** – when a marked chopper should have only been involved in humanitarian activities, like delivering relief supplies. Such a case is subject to claims and counter-claims, and the facts are difficult to establish.

Try these sources, and search even more widely to gain a wide range of reports:

<http://www.newstimeafrica.com/archives/19946>

<http://theaviationist.com/tag/benghazi/page/3/>

- What questions would you need to ask/ what further evidence would you need to gather to verify the claims about the Misrata helicopter?
- **What is perfidy?** Why is it regarded as such a serious war crime?

## Use of emblems in today's media

Popular movies have not helped the average person to understand the vital importance of the red cross. Many films show deliberate misuses of the emblem in war scenes, and it is suggested that these actions are **clever, or even comic**.

- Can you name any?

Today's equivalent is the **depiction of war in video games**. War games are packaged for recreation and absorb both children and adults worldwide – and if used well, they can have an important place in public education.



*Sequence from Arma III - Laws of War*

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has started working with video game developers, so that video games are realistic **and show that types of dilemmas that soldiers really face**. The crucial point is that the rules that govern actual armed conflict should be mirrored in the video games. Perhaps there should be **consequences, penalties, in games too, if a player breaches the law?** Equally gamers might be rewarded for respecting the law of armed conflict. The fear is that if gamers continue to use and see illegal acts on their screens they may come to perceive that their behaviours are acceptable, or 'just what happens in war'.

The keen gamers in the class will likely have lots to say in the following discussion:

- Is the emblem used correctly in the games they commonly play?
- Generally, are breaches of the laws of war ignored in games? Give examples.
- Are there games in which a player **breaching the laws of war has to face consequences?** Can you give any examples?
- Is it important to have this element of restraint [and the framework of the Geneva Conventions] reflected in games? Why or why not?