

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
Stuart Blackburn, Ph.D.

PATHS OF GLORY (1957)

Stanley Kubrick

OVERVIEW Kubrick's fourth film is an adaptation of a novel of the same name (published in 1935), itself based on true-life events of four French soldiers executed in order to set an example for troop morale during World War I. The director chose the title from a poem by the eighteenth-century poet Thomas Grey's 'Elegy':

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike the inevitable hour.
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Kubrick decided to make the film to expose what he believed was the uncomfortable truth about the nature of man. He said that men were 'irrational, brutal, weak, silly, unable to be objective about anything where their own interests are involved.' The result is a devastating critique of war, its cruelty, hypocrisy and insanity. With such an uncompromising expose of the military, the film did not do well at the box office and was banned in France until 1975. It features some of the distinctive elements of Kubrick's filmmaking—noirish grim scenes, taut storyline, use of voiceover to set the context and skilful editing. At the very end, where a lesser director would have fashioned a message of transcendent hope, Kubrick merely shows us a glimpse of humanity underneath the tragedy.

SYNOPSIS After two years of frustrating stalemate, the French general staff want a victory to lift morale and quiet criticism in the press. They order an assault on a German position known as the Anthill. General Mireau is given the assignment and Col Dax is to carry it out. The assault, which everyone knew was impossible, fails. Many men are dead and many didn't advance beyond their own lines. Stung by this defeat, General Mireau chooses to blame the soldiers and charge them with cowardice at a court martial. He also wishes to cover up his own decision to order his guns to fire on the men for not advancing. Another deception involves a Lt Roget's actions while on reconnaissance patrol. Everything is swept under the carpet by a court martial, which returns a verdict of guilty on the charge of cowardice. Three men, chosen by their company commanders, are the sacrificial lambs and are executed at dawn. Dax attempts to save them but fails. Always a soldier, he is ready for the next battle.

MAIN CHARACTERS

Col. Dax	Dax is the main character, who defends his men in a court martial.
Gen. Broulard	Broulard is a member of the French general staff.
Gen. Mireau	Mireau is a slightly lower-ranking general.
Lt. Roget	Roget is a soldier whose cowardice is covered up. Pvts. Ferol, Paris and
Arnaud	These are the men tried during the court martial.

STORY

Context France, 1916. The story begins with a voiceover explaining that shortly after the beginning of the war in 1914, the German army had advanced to within a short distance of Paris. The French mobilised and drove the Germans back, creating a stalemate that has lasted for two long years. This was trench warfare, 'where success was measured in hundreds of yards and lives were paid for in hundreds of thousands.' As we listen to this background, we watch a car approach a French chateau, guarded by soldiers. General Broulard enters and compliments his host, General Mireau, on his taste in carpets and pictures.

Suicide mission Broulard tells Mireau that he must capture a key German vantage point, called the Anthill. And he must do it within two days. Mireau says it is impossible because his division has been

badly depleted and he won't risk their lives on such a hopeless mission. Broulard cunningly appeals to Mireau's belief in his men (and in himself) and thus persuades him to undertake the attack.

Shell-shock Brimming with confidence, Mireau tours the trenches to infuse the soldiers with courage. His bonhomie and optimism strike a false note with the men suffering in the dismal trenches, with artillery fire exploding overhead. When one of the men he talks to responds in gibberish, Mireau is told that the man is suffering from shell-shock. Affronted, Mireau says firmly that 'there is no such thing as shell-shock.'

Col Dax Mireau meets Col. Dax, the commanding officer of the men in the trenches. Through long-range binoculars, Mireau is shown the Anthill, and then, in an underground office, he tells Dax that his men are to take it. Mireau calculates the likely toll of dead men: 5% killed by own fire; 10% in no-man's land; 20% going through the barbed wire; 25% in actually talking the Anthill. That is, more than half the men will die. Dax questions the wisdom of the attack but reluctantly agrees to carry out the order when Mireau threatens to put him on furlough. Repeating the trick Broulard used on him, he also goads Dax into saying that his men are capable of taking the Anthill.

Patrol A slightly inebriated Lt. Roget takes privates Paris and Lejeune with him on a night recce of the Anthill defences. The trio crawl through no-man's land and barbed wire into enemy territory. Ignoring army regulations, Roget sends Lejeune ahead to examine a bombed-out building. Overhead flares light up the night landscape and machine-gun fire rakes their position. Roget is scared and wants to retreat. He justifies leaving Lejeune by telling Paris that he must be dead. He lobs a hand grenade at the building and flees. Paris advances and sees the body of Lejeune torn apart by the grenade.

Accusations Paris returns to the trenches and accuses Roget of cowardice, recklessness and the murder of Lejeune. Roget says that no one will believe him, that they will believe him because he is an officer. Paris does not want to back down but he sees that he would lose if he made a complaint. When Dax enters the underground office, Roget lies and says that Lejeune was killed by enemy fire. Paris doesn't contradict this.

Battle plan In the muddy trenches, Dax outlines the battle plan to his men. Answering their questions, he admits that they will have only limited artillery cover, that the day will be sunny (no cover there, either) and that they will not get reinforcements until sundown. That night, the men talk about whether they prefer to die by a bayonet or a machine gun. They agree that the gun is quicker and neater.

Attack Early in the morning, Mireau and his aides gather to supervise the attack, from a safe distance, of course. As the military brass celebrate the attack with a glass of cognac, the men in the trenches prepare to launch their assault under heavy enemy fire. Timed to the second, Dax climbs the ladder and leads the men into no-mans land. Within minutes, many are mowed down by machine guns or blown up by artillery shells. Their bodies litter the ground.

Failure When Mireau, through his binoculars, sees that Company B (led by Lt. Roget) has not advanced, he telephones to a commander of artillery and tells him to fire on them. shocked by the order to fire on their own men, the battery commander, Capt. Rousseau, refuses to comply unless the order is in writing. Col. Dax goes back to the trenches and tries to rally the troops, but other soldiers are retreating. The attack has failed. Incensed, Mireau orders a general court martial for the following day.

Compromise In a chateau, Mireau upbraids Dax, in the company of Gen. Broulard, and accuses Dax's men of mutiny. Mireau says the punishment will be ten men who will face a trial and possible execution. Dax argues and wins a concession that he, as a former lawyer, will be allowed to defend his men. When Mireau calls his men traitors, Dax asks, 'Why not shoot the entire regiment?' Broulard says the point is to make an example, not slaughter the entire army. Dax suggests that they make an example of him, as the officer most responsible for the failure. 'One will do as well as a hundred,' he says, half in gest. After consideration, Mireau compromises and accepts that only three men will face charges. The general also decides to discipline Capt. Rousseau (who refused to carry

out his order) without a trial. Mireau then informs Dax him that he will punish his insubordination to him by ruining his career.

The accused Col. Dax explains to his company commanders that they must each choose one man to stand trial. Roget chooses Paris in order to prevent him from testifying about his (Roget's) lies and despicable action on the recce mission. Ferol is selected because he is seen as a 'social undesirable'. Arnaud is chosen randomly by lot. They are locked in a dungeon-like room, where Dax visits and tries to raise their low spirits. He also gives them lawyerly advice about how to behave in court.

Trial The trial is held in a magnificently furnished ballroom in a chateau. The three prisoners are seated facing a panel of five judges. They are charged with showing cowardice during the attack on the Anthill. A prosecutor and Dax, acting for the defence, sit on either side of the panel. A small audience includes Mireau and other officers. Under questioning from the prosecutor, Ferol admits that, in the face of machine gun fire, he did retreat. Dax then establishes that Ferol and one other man were the only survivors and that attacking would have been absurd. Arnaud says that most of his comrades were dead or wounded before they had advanced more than three steps. Dax then brings out the fact that Arnaud had twice been cited for bravery. Lastly, Paris admits that he never left the trenches. Dax reveals that he didn't leave the trenches because he had been knocked unconscious by another soldier who had been shot and fell on top of him. The prosecution calls for a guilty verdict and a sentence of death, while Dax, after pointing out that the trial violates various procedures, calls for the court to show mercy. A burly Sergeant instructs his firing squad about how to execute the men in the morning ('No hurry and no fumbling around').

Prison The three convicted men languish in the dungeon-like room. They are frightened, resigned and confused. A priest arrives and administers the last rites to Ferol. Paris gives the priest a letter for his wife and, reluctantly, asks the priest to hear his confession. Arnaud then angrily accuses the priest of parroting sanctimonious bullshit, which triggers a fight that ends with Arnaud being knocked out. A doctor says he has a skull fracture and may not live long. What about the execution in the morning? the other men wonder. 'My advice,' the priest says, 'is to tie him to a pole, to keep him upright.'

Punishment Dax summons Roget and reveals that he knows why Roget picked Paris (to cover up his own mistakes and lies). He then informs Roget that he has picked him to command the firing squad in the morning. Roget quakes with fear at this assignment, but Dax reassures him that it's easy. This is Dax's punishment for Roget.

Blackmail Roget leaves and Capt. Rousseau arrives. He is the battery officer who refused to carry out Mireau's order to fire on their own men, an order that had been kept secret until now. Dax seeks out Broulard in his chateau and, drawing him away from a gala gathering, reveals Mireau's secret order. Dax shows him sworn statements from many witnesses who corroborate the facts. Threatening to present this bombshell ('officer orders attack on own men') to the press, Dax attempts to blackmail Broulard into pardoning the condemned men. Without making a decision, Broulard leaves the room.

Execution The firing squad enters the dungeon in the morning and leads the men out. The unconscious Arnaud is carried on a stretcher. Paris breaks down and sobs, 'I don't want to die.' The officer, a friend of his, tells him to 'act like a man...you've got a wife. Many people will be watching. How do you want to be remembered?' Ferol, who is crying, and Paris are marched out and tied to a pole. Arnaud is tied up while still on a stretcher. The officer pinches Arnaud's cheek, so that he is conscious. They are all shot dead.

Celebration Back in the chateau Broulard and Mireau compliment each other on the excellent execution and sit down to enjoy a meal. Summoned by Broulard, Dax sits down with them. Broulard tells Mireau that he knows about his order to fire on his own men. Mireau calls this a lie, but Broulard says there must be a public enquiry. When Mireau leaves in disgrace, Broulard offers Mireau's position to Dax, but Dax is incensed and accuses the general of hypocrisy.

The Faithful Hussard In a tavern on the military base, a young German girl sings 'The Faithful Hussard', a popular German folk song about a soldier whose sweetheart dies. The French soldiers in the tavern jeer at the attractive young woman, mocking her as the enemy. Slowly, though, their mood changes. Although they don't understand the words, they sense the sadness in her voice. Soon, they hum the tune along with her. The tavern becomes a congregation of mourning.

Back to work Listening on the outside, Dax is approached by a Sergeant who says that they have been ordered back to the front. 'Give the men a few minutes more,' Dax says.

THEMES

Dishonesty The overriding theme of the story is the dishonesty and corrupt nature of the military. The power of the generals, especially the privileges of the general staff, insulates them from scrutiny and encourages deception, bad decision-making and cover-ups. There are numerous examples, but two stand out. First, there is the immoral decision by Mireau to fire on his own troops because they have not moved from the trenches. Fortunately, a resolute battery commander refuses to carry out the order, for which he is punished. But Mireau manages to hush up his error until Dax reveals it to General Broulard. Mireau's power, and his belief in his immunity as a member of the general staff, encouraged him to make such a cruel decision. The other cover-up concerns Lt. Roget's actions on the reconnaissance patrol, when (against regulations) he sent a man ahead, killed him (accidentally) with a hand grenade and then fled back to the trenches. His behaviour is kept secret because the only witness is a lower-ranking man who would not be believed. What the film shows us is that hierarchy encourages deceit and lies. Put simply, power corrupts.

Injustice Allied to this theme of corruption is a second one of injustice. Indeed, the heart of the film is the unjust court martial and the unjustifiable execution of three men. First, the men are chosen not for their supposed cowardice but by personal choice of their company officer. One of the men (Paris) is selected because that officer harbours a grudge against him and wants to prevent him from revealing his unworthy actions on the reconnaissance patrol. Another is chosen because he is a 'social undesirable' (read: Jewish). The third is chosen, more admirably by lottery, but he has two previous citations for bravery. Then the trial itself is manifestly unjust. As Dax points out, no witnesses are called, no written indictment is produced and no defence is allowed. Further, as Dax reveals through questioning, although these men did not advance, they were not cowards. They were survivors of a mad plan by the generals to take an impregnable enemy position, a plan ordered simply to get the press off the back of the generals. Finally, when one of the condemned men is tied to the post while still unconscious on a stretcher, the execution becomes a mockery of justice

Throughout the film, Kubrick dramatises the inequality between the generals and the ordinary soldiers. Beyond the events themselves, he uses cinematography to highlight this hierarchy of status. A good example is the scene in Mireau's chateau, with vast rooms and expensive furnishings, which is swiftly followed by a scene of the men in narrow, muddy trenches. If the generals are enjoying a fine meal with wine, the men are eating rations. While the generals talk about strategy, the men are ducking to avoid artillery fire. And in a brilliant juxtaposition, two songs are used to bookend the film.

War Underlying the corruption and injustice is a deeper indictment of war. The war presented in the film is driven by vanity, cruelty and utter lack of compassion. From the very beginning, when Mireau is persuaded to take on the hopeless mission, we see how human frailty drives the plot. Mireau knows it is suicidal to attack the Anthill. But, after two long years of stalemate and carnage, the public and the press demand some progress against the enemy, some indication that the French general staff is competent. The action chosen is to attack the Anthill. Mireau only accepts this insane task when Broulard appeals to his vanity when he asks, 'So, my dear general, you are incapable of performing this mission?' Dax also only accepts the mission when an appeal is made to his pride, though he is more interested in upholding his men's reputation than his own. This is the insidious logic of war: you accept foolish plans in order to prove you are not a coward. Another example of the insanity of war are the calculations made about deaths. Mireau coolly tots up the numbers when he announces that about 65% of Dax's men will die in the assault. Mireau, Broulard and Dax also negotiate the number of men who should face trial (and certain death): Mireau wants 100 men to stand trial, Broulard suggests 12, Dax (sarcastically) offers just one, himself. In the end, Mireau settles on three. It is like a game of cards, except the losers will die. Perhaps the most devastating

example of the warped mind of the generals is Mireau's comment on the executions. 'The men died wonderfully,' he says, while relishing a piece of juicy chicken. That is pure Kubrick, who would sharpen his satirical attack on the military with *Dr Strangelove* and *Full Metal Jacket*.

Humanity At the beginning, while the credits roll, we hear, a rousing rendition of the 'La Marseilles', the national anthem of France. At the very end, we hear the 'Faithful Hussar', a popular German folk song about a soldier's sad loss. Hearing that song of death at the end, we realise how empty and pompous was the patriotic song at the beginning. It is a brilliant and bold last scene, putting the final words in the mouth of a German, the enemy. With that song, the film communicates the fundamental humanity that unites us all.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Colonel Dax Dax is the hero of the film. Steel-jawed and clear-eyed, he is brave and confident, compassionate and intelligent. He was a lawyer in civilian life and uses that competence to defend his men in a court martial. Although he is every inch a soldier, he is also reflective and capable of considering questions from more than one perspective. He is the emotional and moral core of the film, torn one way by his steadfast adherence to the army and pulled the other by his sense of justice and fair play.

Brave The defining quality of Dax's character is his bravery, which is highlighted in the crucial scene of the assault on Anthill. This is the centrepiece of the film, from which everything else will flow. It is early morning. Dax, face rigid as stone, walks between his men lined up on both sides of the narrow trenches. Artillery shells explode close by, but Dax doesn't flinch or break his stride. His men follow him with their eyes, as if drawing strength from him. They bow their heads and cower in the dust, while he strides purposefully ahead. He checks his watch, draws his pistol, puts a whistle in his mouth and climbs up the ladder, waving his men forward. They advance, many of them dying from the enemy shells, yet Dax urges them on. It is a scene of devastation, with many of his men killed, but he remains resolute in leading them toward their (impossible) objective. This is Col. Dax the brave officer, the leader of men, subjected to the same dangers as the ordinary soldier but maintaining an iron will to succeed.

Reflective Dax's physical resolve is matched by his mental acumen. As a lawyer in civilian life, he is educated and articulate. His intellectual qualities are illustrated in the scene when General Mireau informs him that his division will attack the Anthill, with an estimated 65% of his men dead. Dax hesitates and Mireau says that 'all France is depending on you.' Dax replies that he is 'not a bull and does not need a red flag waved' at him to charge. Mireau doesn't like his metaphor and says, 'Patriotism may be old fashioned, but show me a patriot and I'll show you an honest man.' Dax considers this and then quotes Samuel Johnson: 'Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel.' This idea, which is beyond Mireau, displays Dax's mental agility, his ability to reflect and not just act.

Bold Dax is also a bold man, both in battle and in court. This aspect of his character is dramatised in the set-piece of the court martial of three innocent men. It is a formal occasion, with a panel of judges and the accused arranged in a symmetrical pattern in a large, high-ceilinged room. When the judge asks him to make his plea on behalf the men, Dax rises. As he approaches the judges, the only sound is the creaking of his boots on the marble floor. He stops and says, 'Gentlemen, there are times when I am ashamed to be a member of the human race, and this is one such occasion.' He then contests the authenticity of the court because he was not allowed to present evidence, there are no witnesses called and there is no written indictment. 'The case against these men is a mockery of all human justice,' he says in closing. 'To find these men guilty will be a crime that will haunt you until you die.' These are bold words, which condemn the judges before they condemn innocent men.

Practical However idealistic and fierce Dax may be, he is also a practical man, a lawyer who wants to win the case for his defendants. We see this element of his character in the scene that precedes the trial, when he visits the three men held in prison. The men, understandably, are angry that they have been picked to stand trial—one because he is a Jew, another despite his citations for bravery, a third because he knows too much. None of them is accused for what they did. Dax cuts through all their quarrelling and gives them practical advice on how to behave in court. 'Stick to your story; don't let them shake you out of it. Tell the facts, don't elaborate. You're soldiers, so act like soldiers.' In

other words, be respectful to your officers and don't break the military code. Although Dax himself often does ignore protocol, he knows that these men must not turn the judges against them. Like a skilled defence lawyer in a murder trial, he coaches his clients in order to win their freedom.

Soldier Although Dax is rebellious in thought, questions the military hierarchy and speaks boldly in private, he is never insubordinate in public. He follows orders, he salutes his superiors and he does not shirk his responsibility as a soldier. He shows that part of his character in the very last shot of the film. After the three men have been (disgracefully) executed, Dax stands outside the tavern where his men are enjoying themselves, drinking and singing a sad song that brings tears to their eyes. His sergeant comes and informs that the men have been ordered back to the front immediately. Dax turns back to look at the tavern and says, 'Well, give the men a few minutes more.' Then he turns on his heels and goes into his office, to prepare for the next battle. Despite everything that has happened, Dax is a soldier. He goes back to work when ordered.

General Mireau General Mireau is the counterpoint to Dax. He is pompous, artificial and vain. He bears a deep scar on his cheek, which presumably attests to his experience in battle, but now he occupies a position far from the front lines. Mireau is so distant from reality that he is controlled only by his vanity and ambition, dismisses the horror of war as nonsense and wants to use soldiers as pawns to achieve his own glory.

Ambitious Mireau is an ambitious man. Of course, he wouldn't get to the top of the military command if he were anything else. His ambition, ego and vanity are all displayed in his first scene, when he is informed by General Broulard that he has been chosen to lead the assault on the Anthill. Mireau knows it is a suicide mission and says it is 'out of the question, impossible.' But then, the crafty Broulard begins to work on Mireau's ambition, telling him that he is being considered for a promotion, 'another star'. However, if he refuses the assignment, then all bets are off. Mireau begins to weaken, takes a glass of cognac and launches into what sounds like a forced speech: 'I'm responsible for the lives of 8,000 men. What's my reputation in comparison to that? My men come first of all.' Broulard responds by asking if he thinks that his men are incapable of taking the Anthill. 'Oh, I didn't say that,' Mireau protests, and from that moment he is drawn into accepting the mission. His vanity won't let him refuse it. His ambition to prove himself worthy is too great.

Artificial Mireau's ambition and vanity make him pompous and artificial. As a general, he speaks with forced authority and pumped-up conviction, when in fact he knows very little about what goes on in the trenches or on the battlefield. The scene that best dramatises this artificiality occurs when Mireau goes into the trenches in order to rally the troops before the suicidal assault. With a smug smile, Mireau marches along, stopping to speak to some of the soldiers. Each time, he asks the same silly questions. 'Ready to kill more Germans?' And 'Do you have a wife?' It is forced, false, hollow. The self-satisfied general, insulated from the realities of war, has no idea how to relate to these men. His performance is wooden and artificial.

Arrogant During this inspection tour, Mireau also shows us that he is arrogant. When he asks yet another man about killing the enemy and being married, this soldier does not answer. Mireau is incensed by what he thinks is an insult and asks again, 'Now, have you got a wife, man?' The soldier babbles incoherently, and his sergeant explains that he has shell-shock. Hearing this, Mireau grows indignant and informs him that 'There is no such thing as shell-shock.' Turning again to the soldier, he asks again about a wife. 'Yes,' the man says, 'I have a wife and I'm going to die.' Mireau is angry. 'Get a grip on yourself, and start acting like a soldier,' he says and slaps him hard on the face. 'Transfer this man out the regiment,' he orders the sergeant. 'I won't have him contaminating our brave men.' Here is the cocksure general who won't listen to anyone. He is arrogant.

Paris Private Paris is an average soldier. He is married and he does not want to die. He is also outspoken and unafraid to challenge an officer when necessary. He breaks down when facing death but finds the inner strength to remain dignified at the final moment.

Forthright Paris is not a man who will remain silent if he sees an officer misbehave. He and another private, Lejeune, are led on a reconnaissance patrol by Lt. Roget, who (accidentally) kills Lejeune with a hand grenade and runs back to the trenches. Paris then finds his comrade's dead body and confronts Roget back in the trenches. Roget, who assumed that Paris was also dead

(meaning there would be no witnesses to his immoral actions), is unnerved to see Paris come into his dugout. When Paris accuses him of cowardice, Roget reminds him that he is 'speaking to an officer.' Paris responds by saying that no officer would do what he did. 'No man would, only a thing would,' he goes on, 'only a sneaky, booze-guzzling, yellow-bellied rat.' Roget tries to silence him by saying no one will believe him, but Paris is not deterred and accuses him of 'recklessness, drunk on duty and endangering the lives of others, wanton murder of one of your own men and cowardice in face of the enemy.' That last accusation is exactly what Paris himself is later executed for, but here he is outspoken enough to bring that charge against an officer.

Dignified Paris is later chosen by Roget to be the man from his company to face court martial. During the trial, Paris acts with dignity, giving straight answers and not pleading for mercy. On the morning of the execution, though, he breaks down and begs the sergeant for mercy. When told to get himself together and act like a man, he does just that, not wanting to make a scene of himself. Then, while tied to the post to be shot by the firing squad, Lt. Roget offers him a blindfold and whispers 'I'm sorry.' Remember, Roget is the one who chose him to stand trial, and only because Paris knows what Roget did on the recce patrol. Rather than scream or cry or rant against Roget, Paris merely shakes his head. It is an extremely poignant scene.

General Broulard General Broulard is a wise old owl. As the highest-ranking officer, he is lofty, affable and persuasive. Less emotional and intense than General Mireau, he is able to survey the field and make his moves with serene detachment and achieve better results. He appears genial but has a very firm hold on power and does not hesitate to exercise it.

Cunning General Broulard is a crafty old buzzard. He knows how to manipulate others, how to persuade them, not by threats but by appealing to their vanity and ambition. This quality is clearly illustrated when Broulard persuades Mireau to accept the reckless assignment to attack the Anthill. Mireau knows it is suicidal and, at first, refuses. Broulard plays his trump card, mentioning that Mireau is in line for a promotion. 'Of course, you shouldn't let that influence your opinion of the assignment,' Broulard says disingenuously, for that is precisely why he has mentioned it. Again, Mireau resists, though a little less forcefully, allowing Broulard the chance to blindside him with another suggestion: 'So,' he says, 'you believe that this attack is absolutely beyond the ability of your men?' What can Mireau say to that? Cornered, he must, of course, accept the assignment. In the end, Mireau is convinced that the decision to accept has been taken by him. That is a good example of Broulard's cunning tactics.

Detached Broulard, even more than Mireau, floats above the reality of war. He is the grand strategist, the elevated mastermind not concerned with the petty matters of life and death. The best illustration of the lofty position from which he views the war is when he discusses the necessity of executions for the failure to take the Anthill. Speaking to Dax in the comfort of the chateau, the general says that the executions will be good for morale. 'It will be a perfect tonic for the whole division,' he says. 'There are few things more fundamentally encouraging and stimulating than seeing someone else die...Troops are like children...they crave discipline. And one way to maintain discipline is to shoot a man now and then.' Broulard's statements would be comical if they weren't tragic. He is so cut off from reality that he believes his own absurd ideas.



(Col. Dax in the trenches)



(Col. Dax in the court martial scene)



(left to right, generals Broulard and Mireau)



(Kirk Douglas, as Dax, and Stanley Kubrick on set)