

Escape of the THUNDERBOLT



CONFEDERATE GENERAL John Hunt Morgan scrambled onto the cot, pulled the blanket up to his ears, and turned his face to the cell wall. Then he started counting the minutes until midnight.

It was 27 November 1863, and Morgan had been locked in the Ohio State Penitentiary for more than four months. The Union army planned to keep him there for the rest of the Civil War. But Morgan had other plans.

Morgan huddled in the cell for five long hours. Finally, the prison clock struck midnight. Right on schedule, a guard shuffled down the corridor, shone his lantern into the cell, and then shuffled off. Minutes later, Morgan heard a tap on the floor.

He quickly slipped off the cot, stuffed some clothes under the blanket to look like a sleeping man, and stomped his foot on a spot on the floor. A foot-wide hole yawned beneath his boot. Morgan dropped through

by
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the hole into the dark tunnel below. Six of his officers were waiting for him.

"All right, men," Morgan said. "Let's go."

Morgan was not a common criminal. In fact, he had been an uncommonly respectable businessman back home in Lexington, Kentucky. But when the Civil War broke out, Kentucky remained neutral. Morgan did not. Instead he joined