

Haldeman goes to jail

By HARRY F. ROSENTHAL
Associated Press Writer

H.R. Haldeman, the second most powerful man in Richard Nixon's White House, went to prison Tuesday.

He walked into the gates at the federal minimum security facility at Lompoc, Calif., at 5 p.m. EDT, the Bureau of Prisons reported.

Haldeman reported for his confinement a day ahead of schedule. He and former Atty. Gen. John N. Mitchell had been ordered to surrender to prison officials by June 22.

Mitchell planned to report to the federal facility at Maxwell Air Force Base near Montgomery, Ala., Wednesday morning, his lawyer said.

Both men are under a 2½-to-8 year prison sentence for their part in the Watergate cover-up.

Never before have men who held such great national political power gone to prison: Haldeman, the man who ran the Nixon White House, a convicted perjurer; Mitchell, the first attorney general in history to be convicted of criminal acts.

By reporting early, Haldeman apparently tried to avoid reporters, but newsmen were on the scene.

Haldeman was the 24th man caught in the Watergate web to enter prison. Mitchell will be the 25th and probably the last.

For Haldeman, it was exactly 28 months from the day he, Mitchell and domestic aide John D. Ehrlichman were sentenced by U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica.

He and Mitchell carried their appeals all the way to the Supreme Court, where they were denied a hearing. They have asked the court to reconsider, but chances of that are slim.

No one was closer to Nixon, the fallen president, than these two men. Mitchell had been Nixon's law partner and the director of his two successful presidential campaigns. Haldeman had worked in Nixon campaigns since 1956, devoting himself to the task so completely that people said if Nixon hadn't had a Haldeman, he would have had to invent one.

Mitchell, now 63, carried out the law-and-order edicts of the administration;

Haldeman, now 50, was the gatekeeper of the Oval Office, deciding who could and who could not get in.

Each man must serve at least 2½ years unless his sentence is commuted by President Carter or cut in the next three months by Sirica.

Haldeman, Mitchell and Ehrlichman were convicted of 14 felonies in the Watergate coverup. Ehrlichman chose to begin his sentence while the appeals process went to the Supreme Court.

Their crimes were conspiracy to obstruct justice, actual obstruction of justice, and lying under oath. Nixon had been named as one of the 18 co-conspirators but he was not indicted. His pardon after his resignation in August 1974 removed any threat of charges.