

'His Hobby Is Work' Say

By Judy Luce Mann

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Alexander P. Butterfield, who yesterday revealed that tape recorders have secretly monitored President Nixon's conversations since 1971, was described by his friends and colleagues as hard-working and devoted to the President, a trait he shares with a number of relatively obscure White House aides thrust into prominence by the Senate Watergate hearings.

Butterfield left the White House March 14 to become administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration. He had been hired in December, 1968, by H.R. Haldeman, Mr. Nixon's chief of staff, to work at the Executive Man-

sion. Butterfield and Haldeman had been classmates at the University of California from 1947 to 1949, where their wives became close friends.

Butterfield, who is 47, spent the next 20 years in the Air Force but he and Haldeman "kept abreast through mutual friends," according to Louis Churchville, who has known Butterfield for the past 18 years and recently became head of the public affairs office at FAA.

Butterfield's Air Force career took him to 14 states, West Germany, southeast Asia and to Australia, his last assignment before he retired with the rank of colonel in 1969 to become

deputy assistant to the President. In the mid-1950s he was an instructor at the Air Force Academy in Denver, Colo., where Churchville first met him.

"We used to go night-flying in the F-80, (a jet fighter plane) and if he had instructed classes during the day he'd take his test papers with him and as he flew along, under radar control, he'd correct his papers so he'd be ready the next morning," Churchville recalls.

"His major hobby is work," according to Churchville and others who have known Butterfield. They say he is usually at work by 7:30 a.m., doesn't leave before 8 p.m., and often works on weekends.

Churchville said Butterfield enjoys going out, wishes he could go to the Kennedy Center more often, but lately "hasn't had much time. He's a social guy, very charming. He takes a drink but doesn't smoke." He drinks vodka martinis, "with a pinch of salt," according to Churchville and is an "expert bloody Mary maker. A purist." Butterfield is also a purist in matters of personal attire, rarely straying from conservative dress.

Butterfield was military assistant to the special assistant to the Secretary of Defense during part of the Johnson administration. His boss, Washington lawyer Joseph Califano, also described him as a "superb

Friends of Former Nixon Aide

worker. He's bright, capable, honest. I believe that he's telling the truth. I really have no question about that.

Califano said Butterfield consulted him about accepting Haldeman's job offer. Butterfield "was an Air Force officer with a brilliant career ahead of him," Califano said. "I advised him to take it because I thought it would be a broadening experience for him."

Butterfield, who has repeatedly denied knowledge of the Watergate bugging, has described his White House role as being a "paper pusher," not involved in important decisions. He worked directly for Haldeman but one Sen-

ate source said he did not particularly like him.

In December, 1972, Butterfield was nominated to the \$42,500-a-year FAA post and almost immediately the nomination ran into a snag. The Senate Commerce Committee pointed out that as a retired colonel he was not a civilian, a requirement for the post.

Robert Ginther, aviation counsel to the committee, said Butterfield was "personally upset, as was the President, over the fact that the Committee forced them to withdraw the nomination. He (Butterfield) said he felt the Committee was playing games with him."

Butterfield got his name withdrawn from the retire-

ment rolls, cancelling out his military career, and "about \$10,000 a year in retirement," plus medical and other benefits, according to Churchville. The nomination was resubmitted and approved in March, without enthusiasm. "They felt he didn't have any real qualifications for the job, that the White House was just stuffing these people (staff aides) into various agencies," said a Committee source.

Butterfield lives in a white brick house at 7416 Admiral Dr., in the expensive Villa May section of Alexandria. He married his high school sweetheart, Charlotte Mary Maguire, and they have three children: Susan, a student at

the University of Virginia; Alexander Jr., a student at Duke, and Elizabeth, who will be a senior at Fort Hunt High School in September.

"Alex is apolitical," Churchville says. "He's certainly devoted to the President. He knew absolutely nothing about the Watergate. . . He feels as we all do: it's something that's the kind of a tragedy that puts all the good things the administration has done under a shadow."

A Senate source said Butterfield was "most reluctant" to disclose information concerning the tape recorders in the President's offices and telephones, stating that he was "sure" the President would not want it revealed.