

E. Howard Hunt May Be Paroled

Washington

Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt will be released from prison February 25 if he takes care of a \$10,000 fine still pending against him, the U.S. Parole Commission announced yesterday.

The commission granted Hunt's petition for parole from a prison term of 30 months to eight years for his role in planning the June, 1972, break-in at Democratic National Headquarters in the Watergate building.

But the commission approved the parole on the condition that Hunt pay the fine or make other arrangements with the court to dispose of it.

Justice Department spokesman Dean St. Dennis said if Hunt is unable to pay the fine he could file a financial statement with a federal prosecutor, who would refer it to the court. Under this procedure, a federal judge could decide whether to reduce the fine, eliminate it entirely, or adopt some arrangement requiring payment on the installment plan.

Hunt's attorney, Ellis Rubin, said payment of the fine will be a problem for Hunt, "but it will be made." He said Hunt did not have much money at his disposal, but the \$10,000 will be found somewhere.

He said Hunt would return to Miami after his release.

Rubin described Hunt as thrilled at the thought he will be released. "He wishes to express his gratitude at those who helped him gain his release," Rubin said.

Hunt, 58, has been serving his sentence at the federal prison camp at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida.

He has spent about 2½ years behind bars since he pleaded guilty, January 11, 1973, to charges stemming from the break-in.

He later sought to withdraw the guilty plea, but was unsuccessful. While appealing the judge's refusal to let him change the plea, he was released for about a year but he went back to jail when the appeal was turned down.

In an other action, the commission ordered a new hearing on convicted swindler Billy Sol Estes' petition for release from parole supervision.

Estes, 51, was paroled in 1971 from a 15-year sentence, stemming from a multimillion dollar mortgage fraud. He has been under supervised parole for five years and now seeks an end to that supervision.

Associated Press