

[Home](#) / [News](#) / [News](#)

A judge has handed former Nebraska State Patrol Maj. Bill Hobbs a prison sentence of 25 to 30 years for the sexual assault of a girl.

## Former trooper sentenced in sex assault

- [Story](#)
- [Discussion](#)

Former trooper sentenced in sex assault

CLARENCE MABIN / Lincoln Journal Star JournalStar.com | Posted: Monday, December 18, 2006 6:00 pm | No Comments Posted

Font Size:

[Default font size](#)

[Larger font size](#)

• 0 [tweet](#)

• [Recommend](#) Be the first of your friends to recommend this.



[Buy this photo](#) Bill Hobbs

Little, if anything, in Billy Hobbs' personal history says sexual predator.

He had a normal childhood, he was law-abiding most of his life and he suffered no underlying health problems or emotional disorders, said Lancaster County District Judge Paul Merritt Jr.

Yet Hobbs, 51, a former major in the Nebraska State Patrol, was in Merritt's courtroom Tuesday to be sentenced for first-degree sexual assault of a child.

The charge stemmed from a sexual relationship Hobbs had with a girl that began in 2004, when she was 12.

“No one would have thought you’d be where you are today,” the judge told Hobbs, who, seated next to his attorney, nodded several times in agreement. Hobbs pleaded no contest Oct. 10 to a charge of sexually assaulting the underage girl over a two-year period.

As the girl and members of her family looked on, Merritt sentenced Hobbs to 25 to 30 years in prison. He will be eligible for parole in about 12 years.

In an interview after the sentencing, the girl’s father said his daughter has suffered emotionally from the illicit contact with Hobbs.

The girl, in a letter to the court, said her ability to trust others would be a significant challenge for her.

“He tore this family apart,” the father said. “I just hope I can get my daughter through this.”

The father’s name is known, but is not being published because the Journal Star generally does not identify sexual assault victims.

Authorities arrested Hobbs in February after the girl told school staff he had sexually assaulted her. The assaults took place during an 18- to 20-month period, Merritt said Tuesday.

Hobbs, an administrative services major and a former hearing officer for the State Patrol’s sex offender registry, resigned from the agency shortly after the arrest. He joined the patrol in 1977.

The Lancaster County Attorney’s office later charged him with first-degree sexual assault of a child.

Hobbs initially pleaded not guilty, but in a deal with prosecutors in October, he amended his plea to no contest. In exchange, prosecutors agreed to seek dismissal of a separate child pornography charge pending against him. The charge stemmed partly from pictures Hobbs took of the girl.

Also as part of the deal, prosecutors agreed to not forward to federal authorities reports that could form the basis of a federal sex crime charge.

In remarks before the sentencing, Hobbs’ attorney, Dana London of Lincoln, said Hobbs has been remorseful and shown empathy for the girl.

And, although Hobbs benefited from a plea deal, he also agreed to plead no contest so the girl would avoid a trial, London said.

Hobbs, in a prepared statement, said he recognized the grave consequences his actions have had for the girl.

“Scars will last forever,” he said, his voice choked with emotion. “Nothing I can do will change that.”

As the girl, seated near her father, looked on, Hobbs turned toward her and said, “(The) one thing I’ve not been able to do ... is look her in the eye and tell her I’m sorry.”

Deputy Lancaster County Attorney Holly Parsely told Merritt to remember Hobbs’ victim.

Hobbs submitted 21 letters of support to the court from family and friends, compared to two on behalf of the girl.

“That is why victims are reluctant to come forward,” Parsely said.

She told Merritt neither of the two mental health professionals who recently met Hobbs determined he was psychopathic, and both said he was at a low risk to reoffend.

What that means, she said, is that Hobbs — unlike a pedophile —can’t argue he could not control his urges.

Also, she said, given Hobbs’ background in law enforcement, he clearly knew his actions were wrong.

“If anyone should know better, he should know better,” she said.

After the sentencing, Hobbs was taken to the state Diagnostic and Evaluation Center, part of the Department of Correctional Services.

Mary Earley, a spokeswoman for the center, said no decision has been made on where Hobbs will serve his time. She said he could be transferred out of state for his personal safety.

In addition to the criminal case, Hobbs faces a potential civil judgment through a lawsuit filed by the girl’s father. The lawsuit, which seeks damages on behalf of the girl, is pending in Lancaster County District Court.

Hobbs received his full pension when he resigned from the patrol in February.

John Ballew, the father’s attorney in the civil lawsuit, said Tuesday the pension would be a focus of the lawsuit. He said, however, the pension would also be part of the divorce case pending between Hobbs and his wife in district court.

He said he could attempt to collect damages from the remains of the pension left to Hobbs after the divorce case.

A judge earlier denied Ballew’s request to intervene in the divorce proceeding, Ballew said.

*Reach Clarence Mabin at [cmabin@journalstar.com](mailto:cmabin@journalstar.com) or 473-7234.*

Posted in Local on *Monday, December 18, 2006 6:00 pm*

Share This Story

Print Email ShareThis

## Other Stories

- Condo building burned in north Lincoln
- Send us your homestead stories
- Losing the ghost man of Lincoln
- Platte River basin compressed through time-lapse photography
- Homeowners in 3-mile circle around city don't have to get building permits
- Legislature confirms labor-economic development head after extended debate
- Governor signs budget bill without vetoes
- Governor vetoes payment to child welfare providers

## Sponsored Links

### [Mortgage Rates Hit 2.50%](#)

If you owe under \$729k you may qualify for 3.01%  
APR Govt Refi Plans.  
[www.MortgageRatesExperts.com](http://www.MortgageRatesExperts.com)

### [A \\$6 Trillion Opportunity](#)

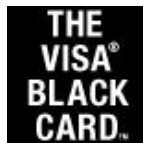
Learn Why This Penny Stock Could Go Stratospheric  
[www.PennyStockWizard.com](http://www.PennyStockWizard.com)

### [Woman is 52 But Looks 28](#)

Her clever solution to aging angers dermatologists.  
We reveal how.  
[yolasite.com](http://yolasite.com)

Ads by Yahoo!

#### Sponsored Links



#### [Apply for the Black Card™](#)

Enjoy Unlimited Airport Lounge Visits For You and Your Guests.  
[www.blackcard.com](http://www.blackcard.com)



#### [RN Degree Programs](#)

Attend Class Anytime Day or Night! Earn Your Degree in Nursing Online.  
[www.DegreePath.com](http://www.DegreePath.com)