

ROBERT LEON SONFIELD, SR.
(1893-1972)

Born April 6, 1893. Graduated from Allen Military Academy, Bryan Texas 1911, LLB Univ. of Texas Law School 1915, post graduate study Columbia University Law School and admitted to practice law in Texas. Admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of the United States April 6, 1945 upon the introduction of Mr. Tom Connally.

April 6, 1917, on the day the U.S. entered World War I, he enlisted in the Army of the United States and was commissioned Second Lieutenant of infantry. American Legion District 8 Commander 1940-1942; Sons of the American Revolution, Pres. Gen 1963-64. Author "A Guide for the Administration of Military Justice". Combat Officer, AUS, World War I, Member Allied Commission on the Reparation of Prisoners & American Military Mission 1918. Staff Judge Advocate, The Infantry School, World War II. Colonel, AUS (Ret). Senior Partner Sonfield & Sonfield. Died Houston, Texas, June 24, 1972

He was admitted to the State Bar of Texas in 1915 and appointed United States Commissioner for the Eastern District of Texas in 1916. On the day World War I was declared, April 6, 1917, he enlisted in the Texas National Guard and entered the Officers Training Camp at Leon Springs, Texas May 4, 1917. He was commissioned second lieutenant, Fifth Infantry, Texas National Guard and assigned to Company G and subsequently transferred to Company B, 143rd Infantry, Thirty-sixth Division. He sailed with the First Battalion, 143rd Infantry, from Newport News, Virginia for Camp Aldershot, near Halifax, Nova Scotia, for an exhibition review before the Governor General of Canada, thence for France where his battalion rejoined the Thirty-sixth Division and participated as a company commander in the Champagne offensive and the Meuse-Argonne offensive. He was promoted to the rank of first lieutenant August 1918, appointed as aerial observer of the Thirty-sixth Division and detailed to the school of aerial instruction; later rejoining his division. In February 1919, he was selected as a member of the Inter-Allied Commission on the repatriation of Russian and allied prisoners of war and the American Military Mission with headquarters at Berlin, Germany, in charge of the supervision of all prison camps in which allied and Russian prisoners were confined and the distribution of food to the prisoners pending repatriation. This assignment gave him the distinction of being the first Texan to enter Berlin after signing of the armistice.

He remained in this position until September 1919, as first lieutenant, 143rd Infantry, Thirty-sixth Division. He received a citation from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Great Britain for the aid he rendered British prisoners of war and letters of commendation from General John J. Pershing, General George H. Harries and from Lieutenant Colonel Carl Taylor. After the war he joined army reserve and was promoted to captain of infantry and adjutant of the 143rd Infantry, Thirty-sixth Division.

He was elected City Attorney for the City of West University Place, a suburb of Houston, when the City was chartered in 1928 and defended the City's ordinance to charge utilities rental for use of public streets before the Supreme Court of the United States. *Fleming et al v. Houston Lighting & Power Co.*, 138 SW 2d 520 (Tex. 1040). Robert Sonfield, Sr. served in that capacity until World War II was declared and he again volunteered for active duty at his reserve rank of Captain. He served as Staff Judge Advocate, Headquarters Airborne Command, Camp Mackall, North Carolina and promoted to Major. He was promoted to Lt. Colonel and completed his tour of duty as Staff Judge Advocate, the Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia where he wrote "A Guide for the Administration of Military Justice" which was published by the Infantry School Fort Benning, Georgia. He also received letters of commendation from the Commanding General of Ft. Benning as well as the Commanding General of the Infantry School for his service on the Fort Benning School Board.

He was a charter member of the River Oaks Country Club and a member of St. Paul's Methodist Church, the University Club, the American Legion Sons of American Revolution and the Sons of Confederate Veterans, Holland Lodge No. 1, A.F. and A.M., a 32nd degree Scottish Rite Mason, the Arabia Temple Shrine and the Arabia Temple Patrol.