

THE GUIDON



Feature Story:
**A LASTING FAMILY
LEGACY: THE EDWIN “PAT”
O’BRIEN BELLINGER ’36
BUGLER ETERNAL AWARD**



A LASTING FAMILY LEGACY

The Edwin "Pat" O'Brien Bellinger '36 Bugler Eternal Award

BY JILL BRIGHT '91



A family photo of John Bellinger '76 and his son, Jack '21, at the bugle stand, taken 26 years ago.

Edwin "Pat" O'Brien Bellinger '36, from the 1935 *The Long Horn*.

It is easy to say "yes" when members want to make a meaningful impact while paying tribute to a loved one. That is exactly what happened with TAMU System Regent John Bellinger '76 and his wife, Gina '89.

When Regent Bellinger learned that the CCA had begun recognizing four Corps buglers that comprise the Bugle Team each Family Weekend, he wanted to ensure the award would continue far into the future. He and Gina chose to establish a CCA endowment for the annual award in honor of his distant cousin, Edwin "Pat" O'Brien Bellinger '36.

Bellinger never knew his cousin. Pat tragically died in a horseback accident during ROTC training at Camp Bullis in San Antonio on July 9, 1935. Sadly, Pat was on his horse when an artillery piece was fired nearby. His horse reared up, throwing the young cadet. He suffered a severe brain injury and later died.

To honor his memory, Pat's classmates funded the original Edwin O'Brien Bellinger '36 Bugle Stand in May 1936. The first stand was located near the old YMCA building. Today a beautifully restored version stands proudly in front of Duncan Dining Center with Bellinger's name etched in the surrounding concrete.

Last year, the CCA created the Bugle Team Award to recognize the Corps' four buglers who rotate playing Reveille each morning at 5 AM, perform at formations, and render taps at many former cadet funerals—all under the quiet call of duty as Corps buglers.

"Live bugle calls can be easily taken for granted, but the buglers have to be at the top of their game each and every day," says CCA President & CEO Bruce Hamilton '78, who knows

firsthand—he served as head bugler 1975-1976. Hamilton is actually the reason the award exists today. "I felt it was important to recognize and help pay the expenses of these four cadets who provide such selfless service to the Corps as well as for funeral and memorial services for former cadets."

Thanks to the Bellingers' generous endowment, the Edwin O'Brien Bellinger '36 Bugle Team Award is now funded in perpetuity. "Our motivation to give back came from watching our son, Jack '21, in the Corps of Cadets. It was the best part of his A&M experience. He and his friends often told us how much the Corps and the university as a whole shaped them," Bellinger says.

Naming the award after Bellinger's cousin made the decision even more meaningful. "The buglers' unselfish service shows the world who Aggies are. Hearing the bugler at a funeral or a wedding is special—and my cousin was part of that legacy. This gift is simply our way of expressing our gratitude," Bellinger shares.

The CCA is deeply grateful for the generosity of Regent and Mrs. Bellinger.