

## A Trip To Gunsite

[Gunsite](#) was founded in 1976 by WW II and Korean War veteran Lt. Col. Jeff Cooper. Cooper's vision was that the training facility in Paulden, Arizona would be the perfect place to teach his [Modern Technique of the Pistol](#), which he had developed during his "leatherslap" matches in Big Bear, California. Mike Dillon got wind of this development and decided to load up the truck and drive to Paulden to see just what Colonel Cooper had going on up there. Mike took his son Steve, his friend, and photographer, Nyle Leatham and Nyle's son Rob along for the ride. [Rob Leatham](#), quoted here from the September 2010 edition of Handguns magazine had this to say about the trip;

"My dad was a photojournalist for the Arizona Republic. Mike Dillon and my dad were buddies. We went up to Gunsite to do a story on this guy who was starting this shooting thing up there. We met Jeff Cooper and went out and shot on the range and that item right there that day probably made me more enthusiastic about shooting than anything I'd ever done. It was the first time I'd ever shot in front of anyone other than family, and I loved it—the showmanship and the desire to compete came out there."

Once again something that Mike had taken on as one thing morphed into a lot more. Meeting Jeff Cooper, going to Gunsite, these things inspired a young man and got him more interested in shooting. We all pretty much know what happened after that. Mike didn't let it go at that either.

His sponsorship of Rob Leatham helped to lay the foundation for an outstanding career. That "shooting thing" that Jeff Cooper started that year didn't do too bad either.

We don't have a video of that meeting, or the fun that they had shooting Mike Dillon's Thompson machine gun, but we do have this classic photo taken by none other than Rob's father Nyle Leatham.