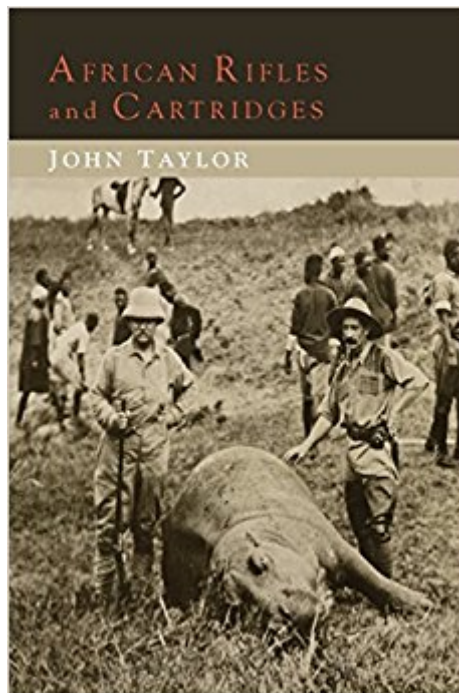




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# African Rifles And Cartridges: The Experiences And Opinions Of A Professional Ivory Hunter



## Synopsis

2014 Reprint of 1948 Edition. Full facsimile of the original edition, not reproduced with Optical Recognition Software. John Howard 'Pondoro' Taylor (1904 - 1969) was a big-game hunter of Irish descent. In Africa he experimented extensively using different types of rifles and calibers, which made him an expert in big game rifles. He is credited with developing the 'Taylor KO Factor' and wrote several now classic books. As a professional ivory hunter with some thirty years of continuous living in the African bush, John Taylor used and tested all the various calibers of British, American and German rifles, and with them killed many species of big game found on the continent of Africa. Taylor's discussion on the practical application of ballistics includes doubles, magazines, and single-shots; the practical value of steel-jacketed bullets versus those covered with cupronickel; the faults of copper-tubed bullets; the actual effects of softpoint bullets with varying degrees of lead exposure; the necessity of modern bullets that will really stand up to the requirements when fired into heavy animals; and many other valuable tips and explanations about cartridges and rifles. Remains a classic work.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

John Taylor was a professional ivory hunter with some thirty years of continuous living in the African bush. He used all the various calibers of British, American, and German makers and rifles, and with them killed many species of big game found on the continent of Africa. Acknowledged to be one of the finest reference works on the large-caliber rifle (both double and bolt action), this new,

high-quality reprint features the original photos (from first edition) on coated paper so that the images can be clearly seen by the reader. A must for anybody interested in rifles. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Short of the Pharaohs of ancient Egypt, few men in history had more experience hunting game than John Taylor. During his African career, he took thousands of head with rifles of all calibers. Even the legendary Elmer Keith could not come close to Taylor's tally. Taylor was also a keen observer and an excellent writer. Many years ago, when I first became interested in hunting, I read this book with fascination. Although it was written 65 years ago, Taylor's advice on rifles, cartridges, and hunting is still relevant today. Not all of us are fortunate enough to hunt Africa, but many North American hunters will pursue the great bears or the ubiquitous feral hog. Although not "dangerous game" by African standards, either one of these beasts will make a mess out of you if they take a dislike to your manners and if your shot is not well placed. You don't really need a .375 H&H for wild hogs, but there is a certain pride to be gained in learning to handle a really powerful rifle and use it on game. Taylor lays out how it should be done. These days, there is a great interest in the old African cartridges, like the .416 Rigby, the 9.3x64R and the 450/400 Nitro Express. Bolt action and single shot rifles in these calibers are both available and affordable, so almost anyone can get a taste of the "African Experience" here at home. The only thing that has changed significantly since Taylor's time is the cost of good double rifles. They were always expensive, but now a double from a prime English maker will set you back six figures. Even the German doubles (of excellent workmanship and quality) are into the five figure range. These arms have an aura to them which screams "Africa," so if you ever get the chance to try one, don't let it pass by. That being said, there is plenty more in the book to interest any serious hunter. If you do any kind of hunting at all, this book is worth reading. If you want to try the big blasters, it is mandatory.

This book was the single most read book of my childhood. It was available at the local library, and I checked it out repeatedly over a period of several years, enthralled by Taylor's descriptions of hunts and the equipment that he and people like Karamojo Bell used on those hunts. The line drawings of the huge .577 and even .600 rounds that were used were awe-inspiring to a kid who shot a .22 at Boy Scout camp. At some point, however, hunting and killing large numbers of magnificent animals lost its appeal, and the book receded in my memory. Fast forward to about 15 years ago, and I was in London with family. Walking around an area not far from our hotel, I spotted the Holland & Holland retail establishment. I wandered in, looking for the rifle display, and after some time being

ignored (to be fair, I hardly looked like a typical (wealthy) customer) an employee approached me. I gushed about my love of the H&H history and rifles, and he stifled a yawn. It was clear that he was thinking it unlikely that I really knew anything about what they produced and sold. I decided I might try to convince him. I asked if they still made the "magazine" rifles (their term for bolt-action), and he raised an eyebrow and said yes. I then asked him if they were still available in .416 Rigby, and he said "Certainly, sir. Would you be interested in seeing the gun locker?" What followed was a wonderful time viewing and actually handling some of the rifles that I knew only from Taylor's book. When it came time to leave, I thanked the clerk, and mentioned in a totally off-hand manner that all of my supposed knowledge came from a library book that I recalled from more than 35 years earlier. I briefly described it, mentioned the cover art, and he said "Oh, that would be the Taylor book, and we might have it in stock." They did, I bought it, and the experience was probably the highlight of my trip. Buy this book, both as a fascinating look at a time in African colonial history and, perhaps, as a cautionary tale of the need for wildlife conservation.

I found most of the information in the book still applicable after all these years. The principles still apply with perhaps some slight modifications due to modern materials, powders and optics and some cartridges. As I have two of the Nitros, discussed, the 450/400 3" and the 450 3 1/4", I was particularly interested in Taylor's "take" on those cartridges. He had a highly favorable opinion on both, through much experience, with perhaps his favorite of the two being the 450/400 3" aka, the 400 Jeffrey. It's much more pleasant to shoot, recoil wise, and is still plenty effective for dangerous game if shots are well placed. The book is still a very worthwhile read for African hunting for the overall principles that it discusses. I highly recommend it!

John Taylor's masterpiece - the definitive work on African hunting from a technical perspective. And even though his experience is nearly 100 years old now, it's still as fresh as yesterday, because the rifles and cartridges really haven't changed much. Craig Boddington's important work on the same subject is truly current, but you won't miss a beat if you just go by what Old Pondoro says. But that's not the book's real glory - anyone can publish ballistic data and shooting tips. What Taylor does is to back up his opinions with some of the most exciting hunting literature ever jotted down by lantern light. He's a wonderful writer, with an easy flowing style that grabs you and takes you along. He saw and did things that no one else will ever again do or see, and in a sense saw the last of the old Africa pre WW2, and brings it alive. He tells you that the .577 NE is just the perfect thing for elephant, and has a couple of tales to prove it. Or how about the .375 H&H as a long range caliber? Well, did he

ever tell you about the time that... It sounds contrived, but it isn't. I can't put this book down, and approach it with caution because I know if I crack it open it'll be like saying "Jumanji" 3 times - the next thing you know hours have passed and there's a lion in your kitchen, licking the butter. Absolutely a desert island book, and one of the first to go in the lifeboat.

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