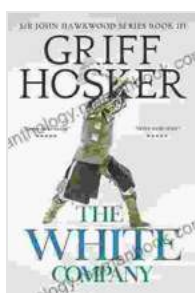


# Sir John Hawkwood: A Chivalrous Mercenary in the Heart of the White Company

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Sir John Hawkwood, a legendary English knight and mercenary leader, played a pivotal role in the turbulent era of the 14th century. As the commander of the renowned White Company, a band of skilled and fearless mercenaries, Hawkwood left an indelible mark on the battlefields of Europe, earning both admiration and notoriety for his military prowess and unwavering loyalty.

## Early Life and Military Career



## The White Company (Sir John Hawkwood Book 3)

by Griff Hosker

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 3379 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
X-Ray : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 282 pages  
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John Hawkwood was born around 1320 in Sible Hedingham, Essex, England. Little is known about his early life, but he is believed to have been the son of a tanner and received a basic education. Hawkwood's military career began as a man-at-arms in the retinue of the Earls of Oxford and Salisbury during the Hundred Years' War between England and France. He quickly gained a reputation for his courage and skill on the battlefield.

## The White Company



In 1361, Hawkwood joined the White Company, a group of free-lance mercenary soldiers who offered their services to the highest bidder. The White Company gained a fierce reputation for their discipline, bravery, and effectiveness in combat. Under Hawkwood's leadership, the company quickly rose to prominence, becoming one of the most sought-after mercenary bands in Europe.

### **Campaigns in Italy**



In 1364, Hawkwood and the White Company were hired by the city of Pisa in Italy to fight against Florence. The company's military prowess proved decisive in Pisa's victory at the Battle of Cascina. Hawkwood's reputation

spread throughout the Italian peninsula, and he soon found himself in high demand as a mercenary leader.

Over the next two decades, Hawkwood fought in numerous campaigns throughout Italy, changing sides and alliances as the political landscape shifted. He served various city-states, including Florence, Milan, and the Papal States, and played a key role in the War of the Eight Saints (1375-1378) and the War of Chioggia (1378-1381).

### **Reputation and Legacy**



Throughout his career, Hawkwood earned both praise and criticism. He was admired for his military skills and loyalty, and feared for his ruthlessness on the battlefield. Hawkwood was known to be a strict disciplinarian, who enforced harsh punishments for any breaches of conduct within the White Company.

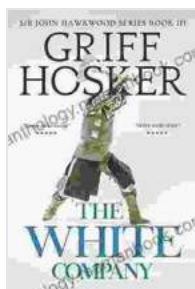
Despite his reputation as a mercenary, Hawkwood was also a deeply religious man. He founded a chapel in Florence and donated generously to the Carthusian monastery in Pavia. Hawkwood's piety and military prowess made him a complex and enigmatic figure.

### Personal Life and Death



In 1377, Hawkwood married Donnina Visconti, the daughter of Bernabò Visconti, the Lord of Milan. The couple had two sons, John and Antonio. Hawkwood spent his final years in Florence, where he died in 1394 at the age of 74. He was buried with great honor in the Duomo, Florence's magnificent cathedral.

Sir John Hawkwood's life and career embodied the spirit of chivalry and the complexities of the mercenary lifestyle during the tumultuous era of the 14th century. As the leader of the renowned White Company, he left a lasting legacy as a skilled military commander and a respected figure in both England and Italy. Hawkwood's unwavering loyalty, military prowess, and enigmatic personality continue to intrigue historians and inspire writers and artists to this day.



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