



# **Blues In Gray: Civil War Journal William Daniel Dixon (Voices of the Civil War Series)**

*Roger S. Durham*

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Unlike Confederate units formed during the Civil War, the Republican Blues had been an existing militia organization in Savannah, Georgia, for over fifty years -- a professional fighting unit rather than an assemblage of ragtag volunteers. The Blues had served under the U.S. flag before taking up arms against it, and after the war they continued their existence in the National Guard of the reunited nation. The Blues in Gray combines the unit's daybook with the journal of company commander William Dixon to offer a day-by-day account of many facets of the war, from the drudgery of garrison duty to the horror of the battlefield. Roger Durham has interwoven the documents to provide fresh insights from a theater of the war seldom noted by historians. The Republican Blues spent three years on the Georgia coast, where they came under seven naval attacks at Fort McAllister before joining the Army of Tennessee to defend northern Georgia against Sherman. Dixon's journal allows us to follow the course of the war and share his correspondence with family and friends, while the daybook lets us observe the unit's administration. The volume also offers unusual revelations about the final months of the war, including a moving account of the retreat of Hood's army from Nashville, where barefooted soldiers left bloody footprints in the snow. With its vivid glimpses of Civil War life in both camp and combat, The Blues in Gray provides a Confederate soldier's view of the entire conflict -- not just a segment of service -- and a rich new source of primary material. More importantly, it breaks through the stereotype of Johnny Reb to show us the trials and triumphs of professional military men in the South.

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