



Lieutenant-Colonel Charles-Michel d'Irumberry de Salaberry, Canadian Voltigeurs, circa 1813-1815  
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Lieutenant-Colonel Charles-Michel d'Irumberry de Salaberry, commander of the *Voltigeurs canadiens*

Canadian-born de Salaberry was from a prominent French-speaking family of the seigneurial class with a tradition of military service dating back to the royal army in France. At 14-years-of-

age Charles-Michel joined the British Army and saw action in the West Indies and Europe. As tensions between Britain and the Americans mounted, de Salaberry proposed raising a corps of French-speaking volunteers. Governor General Sir George Prevost named him commander of this corps known as the *Voltigeurs canadiens*. De Salaberry had the influence, energy and financial resources to turn the Voltigeurs into a disciplined corps of the British line. He held high expectations for his *canadiens* and they delivered — in skirmishes and in battles such as at Crysler's Farm in Ontario. Prevost showed his gratitude and respect to de Salaberry and the Voltigeurs in *The General Orders of the Militia*, October 27, 1813: *Son Excellence, le Gouverneur en chef et commandant des forces ... se fait un devoir et un plaisir de payer le tribut d'éloge qui est si justement dû au ... Lt. Colonel De Salaberry pour sa conduite judicieuse et digne d'un officier ... Son Excellence doit encore les plus grands éloges à toutes les troupes de cette station, pour leur confiance, leur discipline, et leur patience à endurer les fatigues et les privations qu'elles ont éprouvées. Leur détermination à persévérer dans cette conduite honorable ne peut manquer d'assurer la victoire aux braves et loyaux Canadiens, et de jeter le trouble et la confusion dans le cœur de l'ennemi, s'il pensait souiller de sa présence cet heureux pays.* De Salaberry's accomplishments were recognized in 1817 when he received a knighthood, the Order of the Bath. Lieutenant-Colonel de Salaberry became a source of pride and national folk hero in Quebec. This champion of all Canadians is one of the "Valiants" in Ottawa.