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Introduction: Lieutenant Colonel Charles-Michel d'Irumberry de Salaberry (November 19, 1778 – February 27, 1829) was a French-Canadian of the seigneurial class who served as an officer of the British army in Lower Canada. He won distinction for repelling the American advance on Montreal during the War of 1812.

Early Life: Born at the manor house of Beauport (east of Quebec City) in Lower Canada on November 19, 1778, Charles-Michel d'Irumberry de Salaberry was one of four sons in a family with a long tradition of military service. For generations, de Salaberrys had served as officers of the royal army in France and then in the New World. When the English acquired New France in 1763, the family continued its military traditions in British service. Charles-Michel's father, Ignace de Salaberry, was

Seigneur de Chambly et de Beaulac, and was also a British officer who had fought in the defence of Quebec during the American Revolutionary war. He also served as a member of the legislative council of Lower Canada for 30 years.

At age 14, de Salaberry enlisted as a volunteer in the 44th Foot. In 1794, through the patronage of Prince Edward Augustus, a family friend who later became the Duke of Kent, de Salaberry became an ensign in the 60th Foot. He saw action with the 60th regiment in the West Indies, where he was cited for bravery, and in the Netherlands. He earned his commission as Captain-Lieutenant in 1799 and was given a company command in 1803, continuing to serve in Europe and the West Indies.

In 1810, de Salaberry was recalled to Canada with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. He served as aide-de-camp to Major General Francis de Rottenburg, but in 1812 he was appointed to command a new corps of volunteers, the Canadian Voltigeurs (light infantry) and became a chief of staff for the militia. Les Voltigeurs were essentially militia men, but de Salaberry trained them as regulars similar to the Fencible units raised in Upper Canada. He even paid for some of their equipment out of his own pocket.

The War of 1812: In the autumn of 1812, the Voltigeurs went to the frontier of Lower Canada and de

Salaberry took charge of the border defences. He led the forces that repelled the Americans at Lacolle in November 1812, defended Odelltown in September 1813 and led an abortive raid on the American camp at Four Corners in early October 1813. He was then placed under the command of Major General Louis de Watteville, a Swiss officer in British service, who commanded the entire frontier. De Salaberry was responsible for defending the Lower Châteauguay River.

The Americans launched a major offensive against Montréal in the fall of 1813. A 3,700-man division under Major General Wade Hampton was concentrated at Four Corners on the Châteauguay River, just south of the border with New York State. Another division was ready to move down the St Lawrence River to Montréal.

Hampton crossed the frontier on October 21, 1813. De Salaberry had the advantage of being familiar with the terrain he was to defend. Following the attack on Hampton's camp, he had spotted a wooded and swampy area with ravines that intersected the Châteauguay River at right angles. When he learned the Americans were advancing toward this spot, de Salaberry turned it into a strong position. He had a polyglot mixture of 1800 regulars, provincial troops and militia; most of them were French Canadians. A contingent of First Nations warriors was also present. De Salaberry arranged his position in four lines on the west side of the river. A picket of warriors, light

infantry and militia were placed ahead of the first line and another picket was established near a ford across the river.

The Americans attacked at first light on 26 October. One brigade advanced toward de Salaberry's main position, while another moved along the opposite shore. Both were stopped and soon in retreat. Hampton then returned to the US. One part of the American offensive had been thwarted; the second would end at Crysler's Farm in November.

The encounter won fame and honours for de Salaberry, but had he not succeeded, his personal fortunes may have been quite different. He was so convinced that victory would be his that he neglected to report the Americans' advance to his senior officers. Failure would likely have meant court-martial for him and, possibly, the fall of Montreal. The gambit worked, however; Britain struck a gold medal to commemorate the Battle of Chateauguay and de Salaberry became a legendary figure in Quebec history.

Following the victory at the Chateauguay, de Salaberry was appointed Inspecting Field Officer of Light Troops in Canada.

De Salaberry was so angered by the lack of recognition he received in the dispatch about the action at Chateauguay released by Lieutenant General Prevost, the British commander-in-chief, that he offered his resignation. The Duke of Kent intervened and de Salaberry remained

in the army. He saw no other action during the war and relinquished command of the Voltigeurs in early 1814.

Later Life: He left the army in 1815 and settled near Chambly, where he became a wealthy landowner and businessman. Charles de Salaberry served as justice of the peace for various district courts, and in 1818 became a legislative councillor for Lower Canada. After his father's death, he became Seigneur of St. Mathias.

In 1817, he was made a Companion of the Order of the Bath.

Charles de Salaberry died in Chambly, Quebec on February 26, 1829.



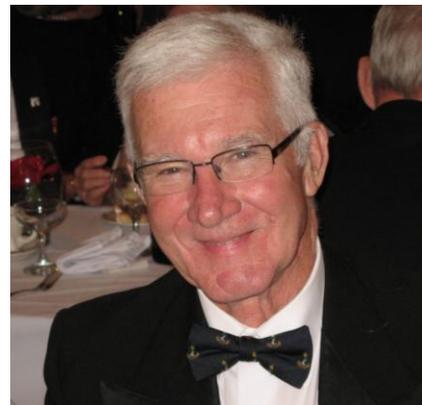
**Detail from Valiant's Memorial,
Ottawa**

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