



(SAMPLE)
CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

NATIONAL ORDER OF TRENCH RATS
DUGOUT # _____

(city)

(state)

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I - NAME

This Dugout shall be known as Dugout # _____, Sector _____ of the NATIONAL ORDER OF TRENCH RATS.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of this Dugout is to build better lives for all of our nation's disabled veterans and their families and, in furtherance of that purpose, to support the programs of the Disabled American Veterans as provided in the National Constitution and Bylaws and Regulations of the National Executive Committee.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

Membership in this Dugout shall conform with the requirements as set forth in the Imperial Constitution and Bylaws. There shall be no associate, special or honorary memberships in this Dugout.

ARTICLE IV - ADMINISTRATION

Section 1: The administrative affairs of this Dugout shall be vested in the Dugout Red Eyed Gnawer and must be ratified by a majority vote of those Dugout members present and voting, at the next regular Dugout meeting.

Section 2: At the time specified in the Dugout Bylaws, the Dugout shall elect annually a Golden Rodent, Silver Rodent and Blue Rodent. Such other officers as may be necessary to operate the Dugout may be appointed by the Golden Rodent, with the approval of the Dugout.

ARTICLE V - EXECUTIVE

The executive power of this Dugout shall be vested in the Dugout Golden Rodent.

ARTICLE VI - AUXILIARY

This Dugout recognizes an Auxiliary known as the Alley Cats, subject to such supervision as conforms with the Imperial Constitution and Bylaws of both organizations.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE 1 - ORGANIZATION

Section 1: This Dugout recognizes the National Organization known as Imperial Van, incorporated by Act of Congress, and affirms its allegiance, and subordination to the National Organization, its Constitution, Bylaws and all rules, mandates and regulations promulgated pursuant thereto. Upon dissolution of the Dugout, the assets remaining after the payment of its debts shall be distributed as provided in Article 17, Sections 11, 12, of the Imperial Bylaws.

Section 2: The governing body of this Dugout shall be the Dugout in session, except as otherwise provided in this Constitution and Bylaws.

Section 3: Minutes of the meetings of the Dugout, shall be kept and be available for inspection by any Dugout member.

ARTICLE II - CHARTER

The Charter of this Dugout, issued by the Imperial Van, is its authority to function and shall be displayed behind the Golden Rodent's station at all regular meetings.

ARTICLE III - OFFICERS

Section 1, Para. 1: The Dugout shall elect annually a Golden Rodent, Silver Rodent and Blue Rodent. Neither the Dugout Golden Rodent nor any Dugout elected officer may serve as Dugout Red Eyed Gnawer.

Para. 2: The Golden Rodent, with the approval of the Dugout, shall appoint the Red Eyed Gnawer and Dugout Committees, with the exception of the Nominating Committee, which shall be elected by the Dugout.

Para. 3: Such other officers as may be necessary to operate the Dugout may be appointed by the Golden Rodent, with the approval of the Dugout.

Para. 4: A Dugout officer report shall be submitted to Sector and Imperial within ten (10) days after the installation of newly elected or appointed Dugout officers or in the event of any subsequent change in the Dugout officers during the membership year.

Para. 5: There shall be no voting by proxy or voting by absentee ballot.

Section 2, Para 1: The Golden Rodent shall be the presiding officer at all Dugout meetings and, in his absence, the duty will fall to the next highest officer in line of succession who is present.

Para. 2: The Silver Rodent shall be the Membership Chairman and as such is responsible for campaigns to increase membership.

Para. 3: The Red Eyed Gnawer shall keep an accurate record of all monies received and disbursed and shall deposit any monies received as soon as possible. The Red Eyed Gnawer shall make a report on Dugout finances at each meeting and records shall be open to any member when a request is made in writing. An annual financial report, in accordance with the requirements of the Imperial Bylaws, shall be submitted to Sector and Imperial.

Section 3, Para 1: Upon election or appointment, and installation of the successor to any such Dugout office, all Dugout property in his or her predecessor's possession shall be surrendered to the newly installed officer.

ARTICLE IV - QUALIFICATIONS

Section 1: Any person who is a member of this Dugout shall be eligible to any elective or appointive office in this Dugout, except as otherwise provided in this Constitution and Bylaws.

ARTICLE V - TENURE OF OFFICE

Section 1: Officers for the Dugout shall be nominated during the May meeting and again immediately prior to the June election meeting.

Section 2: Elected and appointed officers shall be installed within thirty (30) days of their election or appointment. They shall serve for one (1) year or until newly elected or appointed officers have been installed.

Section 3, Para 1: Unexcused absence of any officer from three (3) consecutive meetings shall be cause for removal by the Dugout, and the Golden Rodent is empowered to appoint a Dugout member to serve the unexpired term, subject to the approval of the Dugout.

Para. 2: In the event the office of Golden Rodent shall be vacated for any reason, the Silver Rodent shall be elevated to Golden Rodent, Blue Rodent to Silver Rodent and the vacancy filled as outlined in Para 1 of this Section.

Section 4: It shall require a majority vote of those Dugout members present and voting to elect a candidate for any Dugout office. It shall also require a majority of votes cast to elect delegates or alternates to a Sector or Imperial Rendezvous.

ARTICLE VI - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: No new applicant shall be denied Dugout membership if he or she meets the eligibility requirements as set forth in the Imperial Constitution and Bylaws.

Section 2: Only members of the Dugout in good standing are eligible to vote on any motion or at any election.

Section 3: Members of another Dugout may secure a transfer of membership to this Dugout, with the approval of the membership of this Dugout.

Section 4: They will be voted upon by a 2/3 vote of members present necessary for election to membership.

ARTICLE VII - FINANCES

Section 1: The Red Eyed Gnawer or other designated officer shall deposit all monies in the name of the Dugout and shall countersign with the Golden Rodent or one other designated Dugout officer on all checks.

Section 2: The Red Eyed Gnawer or other designated Dugout officer shall be charged with handling normal finances in the operation of the Dugout.

Section 3: Membership dues shall be as provided in the Imperial Bylaws.

ARTICLE VIII - MEETINGS

Section 1: Regular Dugout meeting dates, time and location shall be determined by majority vote of the Dugout in session.

Section 2: The Dugout must hold at least four (4) regular meetings with a quorum present within a membership year.

Section 3: Special meetings of the Dugout may be called by the Golden Rodent whenever the Golden Rodent may deem it necessary, or when the Golden Rodent is requested in writing to do so by ten (10) or more Dugout members.

Section 4: Rules of Dugout meetings shall be as follows:

- RULE 1. A quorum shall consist of seven (7) members in good standing, of which at least two (2) must be elected Dugout officers.
- RULE 2. Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, shall govern the Dugout in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with this Constitution and Bylaws, the Sector Constitution and Bylaws, or the Imperial Constitution and Bylaws.
- RULE 3. Discussion of personal grievances will not be in order on the floor unless introduced by the Grievance Committee or other Committees having the authority to consider any such matters.
- RULE 4. Matters concerning only an individual member, with respect to his or her own personal interest, shall not be in order but may be taken before the proper Committee.
- RULE 5. Voting shall be by viva voce unless otherwise requested by at least seven (7) members.

ARTICLE IX - COMMITTEES

Section 1: All Dugout committees will meet at the call of the Golden Rodent, or as otherwise provided in this Constitution and Bylaws.

Section 2: Committees shall consist of not less than three (3) nor more than seven (7) members (except as may otherwise be herein provided), including the Chairman. Committees shall be

appointed by the Golden Rodent, with the approval of the Dugout, with the exception of the Nominating Committee, which shall be elected by the Dugout.

Section 3: The Dugout shall have an Audit Committee composed of at least three (3) members of the Dugout, excluding the Golden Rodent, Silver Rodent, Red Eyed Gnawer and Finance Committee Chairman. The Audit Committee shall conduct an annual audit in accordance with the requirements of the Imperial Bylaws.

ARTICLE X - MISCELLANEOUS

Section 1, Para 1: These Bylaws may be amended at any Dugout meeting by a vote of two-thirds of those Dugout members present and voting, subject to approval of the Sector and Imperial Bench Rats, and effective only after date of said approval, provided that any such amendment is read at two (2) meetings and that all Dugout members were notified of the proposed change prior to each of the two (2) meetings.

Para. 2: A copy of this Constitution and Bylaws shall be properly affixed to the back of the framed Charter to prevent its loss and in order that it may always be available for reference.

Para. 3: To the extent to which any of the provisions of this Constitution and Bylaws are, or may at any time become, inconsistent or in conflict with the provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws and lawful mandates, decisions and regulations of the Imperial Organization, as now in force or as hereafter amended or adopted, this instrument shall be deemed amended so as to conform thereto.

Section 2: All disciplinary actions shall be conducted in accordance with Article 17 of the Imperial Bylaws and applicable Regulations of the Imperial Executive Committee.

Section 3: The masculine gender, whenever used in these Bylaws, and any documents used by the National Order of Trench Rats, shall include the feminine gender.

Adopted after this second and final
reading on the _____ day
of _____, 20__.

RED EYED GNAWER (DUGOUT)

GOLDEN RODENT (DUGOUT)

DUGOUT BENCH RAT

IMPERIAL BENCH RAT

SUGGESTED PROVISIONS FOR DUGOUT CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

Should you wish to enlarge upon the Model Constitution and Bylaws, the following are suggested provisions and guidelines that can be included in your Dugout Constitution and Bylaws at the discretion of the Dugout membership.

SPECIAL DUGOUT MEETINGS

Special meetings of the Dugout may be called by the Golden Rodent whenever the Golden Rodent may deem it necessary, or when requested in writing to do so by (number) or more Dugout members. The call of any such special meeting shall specifically state the purpose for which it is called. No other business, not specified in the call, shall be transacted at the special meeting.

OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES

The Golden Rodent, or in his/her absence the next highest officer, shall preside at all regular or special meetings of the Dugout. He/She shall maintain order and dispatch such business as may legally come before him/her. All checks or vouchers issued by the Dugout Red Eyed Gnawer must be countersigned by the Golden Rodent. He shall perform all other duties that may reasonably be assumed to be incidental to his office, including those set forth in this Constitution and Bylaws and in the Official Imperial Ritual, and such other duties as may be lawfully delegated to him by the Dugout.

The Silver Rodent and Blue Rodent, in the order named, shall perform the duties of the Golden Rodent in the event of his absence. If the Golden Rodent should die, resign or be removed, the same order of authority would be in effect until a new Golden Rodent is elected.

The Red Eyed Gnawer is responsible for keeping the Dugout's records and conducting the Dugout's official correspondence. He must keep detailed records of the Dugout's meetings and business affairs. All motions considered by the Dugout should be recorded along with the names of the members who make, second, or speak on motions. The Red Eyed Gnawer is responsible for the membership records and should make certain they are kept up to date.

At each business meeting, the Red Eyed Gnawer should read the minutes of the preceding meeting and make sure that a motion of approval or rejection is passed.

At each Dugout meeting, the Red Eyed Gnawer should read all correspondence received between meetings and see that all matters, which require action by the Dugout are properly disposed of. He/She should answer all correspondence promptly and file copies of his responses with the Dugout records.

The Red Eyed Gnawer shall work closely with the Golden Rodent, Red Eyed Gnawer, and other Dugout officers in order to efficiently carry out the duties of his office.

The Red Eyed Gnawer shall receive and immediately deposit all the Dugout's money in a bank account in the name of the Dugout without any deductions or offsets. He shall make authorized disbursements only by checks or vouchers signed by himself and countersigned by the Golden Rodent. He shall keep a system of accounts approved by the Dugout and shall preserve all receipts and checks or vouchers for payments made. He shall render a monthly report of receipts

and expenditures to the Dugout not later than the first regular Dugout meeting following the last day of each calendar month. An annual financial report, audited and approved by the Dugout Audit Committee, shall be submitted to the DAV State Department and DAV National Organization within ninety (90) days after the close of the accounting year of the Dugout, as required by the National Bylaws.

The Silver Rodent shall perform the duties of his station as set forth in the Official DAV Ritual for Senior Vice Commander. He shall encourage friendship among the members of this Organization, discourage discord, and promote harmony. Subject to the direction of the Dugout, he shall act as Chairman of membership solicitation activities to the end that every eligible veteran may become a member. With the approval of the Dugout, the Silver Rodent may appoint one or more members to assist him in such membership activities.

The Blue Rodent shall perform the duties of his station as set forth in the Official DAV Ritual for Junior Vice Commander. He shall see that every member is given a reasonable opportunity to state his views on any subject under discussion in a meeting of the Dugout, not inconsistent with this Constitution and Bylaws or Robert's Rules of Order. He shall, at all times, encourage loyalty to the United States of America, to the DAV, and to the members of the Dugout. Subject to the direction of the Dugout, he shall act as Chairman of the Americanism activities of the Dugout and, with the approval of the Dugout, may appoint one or more members to assist him as such Chairman.

The Hole-y Rat shall perform the duties of his station as set forth in the Official DAV Ritual for Chaplains. He shall visit the sick and comfort the families of those members who pass away. He shall be responsible for encouraging attendance at DAV conducted funerals and the proper conduct thereof. Subject to the direction of the Dugout, he shall act as Hospital Visitation Chairman and, with the approval of the Dugout, may appoint one or more members to assist him as such Chairman.

The Historic Rat shall keep a brief history of the activities of the Dugout during his term of office, to be kept as a permanent record of the Dugout. He shall also act as Publicity Officer of the Dugout and regularly furnish proper publicity materials to local newspapers, radio stations and television outlets, as well as official DAV National and Department publications, with the approval of the Golden Rodent. No other member shall cause any publicity to be given to any Dugout activity or concerning the Dugout without the approval of the Dugout.

The Cure Rat shall advise and assist veterans disabled in line of duty during time of war, and their dependents, in the preparation and processing of their claims for benefits from any governmental agency. He shall also assist them in securing suitable, gainful employment.

The Bench Rat, upon the request of the Golden Rodent of the Dugout, shall render an opinion upon all parliamentary questions, upon any question arising out of any dispute upon the floor of the assembly, or concerning the interpretation of this Constitution and Bylaws, or the Constitution or Bylaws of the National organizations. Upon receipt of his opinion, the Golden Rodent (or presiding officer, if the Golden Rodent is not in the chair) shall announce his ruling or decision, which need not be in accordance with the opinion of the Bench Rat. Such decision shall be final and binding upon the Dugout unless (1) overruled by a two-thirds vote of the members at the meeting during which the decision is announced, or (2) reversed upon an appeal taken to the next higher governing body within thirty (30) days after such decision is made known.

The Iron Claw shall perform the duties of his/her office as set forth in the Official DAV Ritual as Officer of the Day. He shall welcome all visitors and see that each is properly introduced.

In addition to the foregoing, the respective Dugout officers shall faithfully perform and carry out, such other duties as may be properly assigned to them from time to time by the Dugout.

A member can hold only one elective Dugout office at any one time. A delegate to a National or Department Convention is not holding an "elective office" within the meaning of this Section, except as otherwise provided herein; an elected officer may also hold an appointive office, and vice versa, except as may otherwise be provided in the National, Sector or these Constitution and Bylaws.

The office of the Red Eyed Gnawer may be held by the same person. The Cure Rat may hold any other elective or appointive office. Neither the Dugout Golden Rodent nor any Dugout elected officer may serve as Dugout Red Eyed Gnawer.

By accepting any elective or appointive office, a member agrees that his services shall be rendered gratuitously and that he shall not be entitled to reimbursement for any sums advanced, incurred or spent unless expressly authorized by the Dugout at a regular Dugout meeting. No chairman, committeeman, Dugout officer or other Dugout member shall have the power or authority to incur any expense or obligation or bind the Dugout, unless by prior express approval of the Dugout, evidenced by a majority vote at a regular meeting. A member, by accepting any elective or appointive office, promises and agrees to perform the duties of such office or appointment to the best of his ability; to act and conduct himself in such manner, at all times and places, as will only affect the good of the Organization; to enforce and sustain this Constitution and Bylaws, and the Constitution and Bylaws of the National and Sector organizations; and when his successor has been duly elected or appointed, to surrender to him without notice or demand all the records and other property of the Dugout or of the Organization in his possession or under his control.

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

All voting for officers shall be by written ballot, except by unanimous consent.

In the event of a vacancy of any elective office, nominations and election to fill such vacancy may be made at the same meeting.

All nominations for Imperial Convention delegates shall be made at the meeting preceding the meeting at which they are to be elected. Election for Imperial Convention delegates shall be held not less than sixty (60) days preceding the opening date of such convention.

Installation of Dugout officers shall take place within thirty (30) days of their election, or appointment. Officers elected or appointed to fill vacancies shall be installed at the same meeting at which they are elected or appointed.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Whenever the Dugout has had thirty (30) or more members for three (3) consecutive months, the Dugout shall set a time, at a regular meeting to be held not more than thirty (30) days thereafter, at which an Executive Committee shall be elected to hold office until the next annual election.

Thereafter, the Dugout shall elect an Executive Committee at each annual election until such Committee shall be dispensed with by a three-fourths vote of the Dugout.

The Executive Committee shall be composed of the Golden Rodent, the Silver Rodent, the Blue Rodent, the Red Eyed Gnawer, and four (4) Dugout Executive Committee Members, the latter to be elected from Dugout members in good standing as above provided, and in accordance with "Nominations and Elections." Four (4) such committee members shall be elected thereafter at each annual Dugout election. The Committee shall elect its own Chairman from its membership, who shall not be the Golden Rodent. None of the four (4) Dugout Executive Committee Members shall hold any other elective office in this Dugout.

After an Executive Committee has been elected, and so long as it continues to function, no expenditures shall be voted upon or authorized by the Dugout in excess of \$50.00, unless first referred to the Executive Committee for its recommendations, except by a three-fourths Dugout vote. All fund-raising projects and all agreements and contracts must be referred to the Executive Committee for its recommendations before being acted upon by the Dugout.

The Executive Committee shall make recommendations to the Dugout, from time to time, which it believes will be of benefit to the Dugout.

The Committee shall also act as a Resolution Committee, and no resolution, shall be adopted by the Dugout unless first submitted to the Executive Committee for its recommendations, except by a three-fourths affirmative Dugout vote.

In the event this Committee fails to make recommendations upon any matter referred to it within a reasonable time, the Dugout, by majority vote, may act upon such matter without receiving the recommendations of the Committee.

The minutes of each meeting of the Executive Committee, shall be read at the next following regular Dugout meeting by the Red Eyed Gnawer. The approval of the minutes by the Dugout shall constitute an approval of the recommendations and actions taken by the Executive Committee as reported in such minutes. When the minutes are read, any Dugout member may request that any part thereof be discussed or voted upon separately. The Executive Committee shall hold one regular meeting each month on the _____ (example: "first Tuesday") at _____ o'clock p.m. and may hold special meetings upon the call of the Chairman or the Golden Rodent, or any three (3) members of the Committee who may request the same in writing. Notice of the time and place of each special meeting shall be given in writing to each member of the Committee not less than forty-eight (48) hours prior to the holding thereof except with the unanimous consent of all members of the Committee. A majority of the members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum.

One of the purposes for the creation and continuance of the Executive Committee shall be to provide a means for the consideration and discussion of routine and other business affairs of the Dugout and to make recommendations to the Dugout of desired action. This will serve to reduce the time which might otherwise be consumed during Dugout meetings in such discussion, streamlining Dugout meetings to provide for earlier adjournment and time for entertainment and social activities. However, the sole power to approve or disapprove such recommendations, or to act, in whole or in part, contrary thereto, shall remain in the hands of the Dugout.

RESTRICTIONS AND MISCELLANEOUS

The Dugout may direct that notice be sent to any elective or appointive officer who has failed to attend three (3) consecutive meetings of the Dugout or who, in the opinion of the Dugout, does not appear to be fulfilling the duties of his office, stating that at the next regular meeting (giving the time and place), the matter of his recall from office will be considered. At the meeting set forth in such notice, the Dugout, by a vote of two-thirds of those Dugout members present and voting, may declare such office vacant and such officer recalled. If an elective officer, his office shall be filled by nomination and election at the same meeting. If an appointive officer, the Golden Rodent shall appoint another member to fill such vacancy with the approval of the Dugout.

The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, shall govern the Dugout in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with this Constitution and Bylaws, or the National Constitution and Bylaws.

The order of business at any regular Dugout meeting shall be as prescribed in the Official NOTR Ritual and as dictated by the needs of the Dugout.

There shall be no voting by proxy or by absentee ballot. Only members in good standing and present shall be entitled to vote on any question or at any election. The presiding officer shall be entitled to vote only in case of a tie or where the voting is by written ballot.

Each member accepting or retaining membership in the Dugout agrees to be bound by this Constitution and Bylaws and the National Constitution and Bylaws, now in force or hereafter adopted or amended. Each member also agrees not to bring any action in any court of law or equity relating to his rights or privileges as a member or officer until all remedies provided by this Dugout's Constitution and Bylaws and the National Constitution, Bylaws and lawful mandates have been exhausted.

Except as otherwise expressly provided in the National Bylaws, the Dugout shall not sponsor or engage in, directly or indirectly, any fund-raising project without the prior approval of the governing National Bylaws. If the Dugout is located in a state not having a Sector, it shall not take such a course without the prior approval of the National Organization.

The name of this Dugout must not be used in connection with any political, sectarian or labor dispute, nor in any matter not directly related to wartime service-disabled veterans. Nor shall the Dugout enter into or engage in any such activities. However, nothing in this paragraph shall prohibit the Dugout from participating in political issues which have a direct bearing upon the welfare of America's disabled veterans.