**National Constitution**

**And**

**By-Laws**

Of the

National Order of Trench Rats

As newly revised at the

National Rendezvous at Las Vegas, Nevada

January 16, 2023

Imperial Headquarters

P.O. Box 500208 Malabar, FL 32950

(321) 480-5353

501(c)3 Organization

REVISED

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# CONSTITUTION

## PREAMBLE

For God and Nation, and for our commonwealth, members of the Veterans community maintain the honor, integrity, and supremacy of our country, holding in remembrance the sacrifices in common made and drawn together by strong bonds of respect and mutual suffering, solemnly and firmly associate ourselves together in creating the National Order of Trench Rats, the principles and purposes of which shall be supreme allegiance to hold aloft the torch of true patriotism; strive for a better understanding between nations that peace and goodwill may prevail; to cherish and preserve the memories of our veteran association; and to aid and assist worthy veterans, their widows, their orphans and their dependents.

## ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this organization shall be “National Order of Trench Rats”.

## ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

 The National Order of Trench Rats is formed for the purpose of providing a closer bond by which Veterans may be drawn together for the further benefit of the Veteran and to provide a fun and philanthropic order to aid and assist in its aims and purpose in every way possible and to coincide with the National Order of Trench Rats Mission Statement.

## ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

Any veteran with a General Discharge or above, is eligible for membership in the National Order of Trench Rats, who by their personal work, aid, help, effort, sacrifice and service, has shown their devotion to the best interest and welfare of veterans, their dependents and survivors.

## ARTICLE IV – POWERS

To have perpetual succession, to adopt a corporate seal and alter the same at pleasure; to adopt a constitution, by-laws and regulations to carry on its purposes, not inconsistent with the laws of the United States or any state, to use, in carrying out the purposes of the organization, such emblems and badges as it may adopt, to establish and maintain offices for the conduct of its business; Sectors and territorial organizations and local Dugout organization; to any and all such acts and things as may be necessary and proper in carrying into effect the purposes of the organization.

## ARTICLE V – ADMINISTRATION

Section 1. The administrative affairs of this organization shall be vested in the Imperial Council, to be composed of all the Imperial Rats.

 Section 2. The National Order of Trench Rats Nominating Committee shall nominate an Imperial Golden Rodent, Imperial Silver Rodent, Imperial Blue Rodent, Imperial Turquoise Rodent, Imperial Bubonic Plague Rodent, Imperial Black Plague Rodent, and Imperial Iron Claw, with the approval of the Imperial Council.

Section 3. No person shall succeed himself as Imperial Golden Rodent.

## ARTICLE VI – LEGISLATION

The supreme legislative powers of this organization shall be vested in an Imperial Rendezvous, which shall be composed of all Imperial Officers which are now, or may be hereafter, included in this organization.

## ARTICLE VII – EXECUTIVE

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

## ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended at any Imperial Rendezvous by a written resolution submitted to the Resolutions Committee and a vote of two-thirds of the delegates represented at the By-Laws Committee. Approved resolutions will be read at the next two General Business meetings before a vote of all members present can be taken.

# IMPERIAL BY-LAWS

## ARTICLE 1 - ORGANIZATION

 **Section 1**. The governing bodies of the organization shall be the Imperial Board, Imperial Council, Sectors and Dugouts.

**Section 2.** Each body shall keep records of its proceedings, which shall be open for inspections to any recognized officer in good standing of the Organization.

 **Section 3**. The National Order of Trench Rats shall be composed of an Imperial Board, Imperial Council, Sectors, and Dugouts. The term “Imperial Board” shall be exclusively Past Golden Rodents (Known as Imperial Rodents – IRs). The board serves to provide and establish policy for the management and act as trustees to guide the direction of all funds, with the option to grant exceptions to these By-laws by a two – thirds affirmative vote of those in attendance at a meeting of the Board. Any exceptions will not be valid until the next Imperial Rendezvous and may only be changed permanently by resolution approved by the Imperial Council. The Imperial Board serves to provide recommendations/suggestions to the Imperial Council through the Imperial Golden Rodent/Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer with final approval of the Imperial Council. Additionally, the Imperial Board shall be the undisputed Authority for disciplinary action taken in regard to violations of the National Order of Trench Rats By-laws committed by Imperial Rodents (IRs), to include: Suspension, Limbo, or Expulsion, with “LIMBO” to mean an intermediate state or condition. Any other violations of the National Order of Trench Rats By-laws by membership shall be handled through and by the Imperial Council.

**Section 4.** The term "Sector" shall be composed of all Dugouts located within a given State, Territory, Commonwealth or the District of Columbia of the United States. Sectors shall function as a unit between the Dugouts and the Imperial Council.

**Section 5**. It shall have no political or administrative significance.

## ARTICLE 2 – POLICY

**Section 1**. The National Order of Trench Rats is a fraternal and philanthropic organization.

**Section 2.** This organization shall be non-political and non-sectarian and the name of this organization or name of any subdivision thereof shall not be used in representing the desires or wishes of its membership in any political, sectarian or labor dispute, except as hereinafter provided. Provided, however, that the foregoing shall not prevent this organization or any subdivision thereof from participating in political issues which have a direct bearing upon the welfare of America’s veterans, their dependents and survivors.

**Section 3.** It is the policy of this organization not to condone the exploitation of any person or persons because of their race, creed, ethnic background, age, or gender.

**Section 4**. Immoral, degrading and/or otherwise demeaning conduct of any nature during any NOTR Ritual ceremony is prohibited. Each subordinate unit is responsible to ensure that its Ritual ceremonies conform to this policy.

## Section 5.

##  Para. 1: No member shall appear before any legislative body or speak in the name of this organization or any subdivision there of propounding a position contrary to any resolution that is in effect with regard to such legislation, which resolution has been regularly adopted by the Imperial Rendezvous.

Para. 2: No federal legislation shall be sponsored or endorsed by an Imperial Officer or any member on behalf of or in the name of the NOTR, or any subordinate unit unless it has been approved by an Imperial Rendezvous.

Para. 3: In the absence of any mandate covering any matter herein laws already enacted by Congress are under attack, the Imperial Golden Rodent, Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer and Imperial Council are hereby placed under a continuing mandate by these By-Laws to resist and oppose any changes in laws or regulations advocated by any Presidential Commission, Executive Order, by special investigative commission created by Congress, or any legislative bill sponsored by any standing or special committee of the congress that would repeal or deprive veterans, their dependents and survivors of benefits already provided by such laws or regulations. However, they may support those that are deemed by them to be beneficial to veterans or their dependents.

## ARTICLE 3 – IMPERIAL RENDEZVOUS

**Section 1**. The legislative body of the National Order of Trench Rats shall be the Imperial Rendezvous to be held annually in Las Vegas, NV as approved by the Imperial Council.

**Section 2**. At the Imperial Rendezvous, each Dugout shall be entitled to one delegate for each 15 members or fraction thereof. Any Dugout chartered between July 1st and the holding of the Imperial Rendezvous, will be recognized at the Imperial Rendezvous and its delegates will be seated with full power to vote. However, the number of members shown on the roster will determine the number of delegates to which such Dugout will be entitled. Each Dugout shall also be entitled to one alternate for each delegate, who shall have the same power as delegates with the exception of voting power, provided, however, that the delegates of any Dugout which is indebted to Imperial Headquarters shall not be entitled to vote at the Imperial Rendezvous.

**Section 3**. The highest standing Sector Officer present and each delegate, each Elected Officer and Appointed Officer, with the exception of the Imperial Rendezvous Rat (IRR) and Imperial Historic Rat (IHiR), and each Imperial Rodent shall be entitled to one vote. The majority of the delegates present from their Dugout shall cast the vote.

. **Section 4**. Proxies of any kind are forbidden.

**Section 5**. A quorum of an Imperial Rendezvous shall consist of a majority of Dugouts registered.

**Section 6**. The Imperial Golden Rodent will be entitled to vote only to break a tie on any question that arises.

**Section 7**. The Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer in conjunction with the Sector of Nevada shall have full power to make all arrangements for the Imperial Rendezvous and shall act as the Credentials Committee reporting on the number of IRs, Imperial Elected Officers , IERs, Sectors, Dugouts, and Members present at the Rendezvous.

**Section 8.** Rules of the Imperial Rendezvous

Rule 1. Roberts Rules of Order, newly revised, will govern except as hereinafter specifically stated.

Rule 2. For the purpose of recognition, a member of the Imperial Rendezvous must (1) stand, (2) address the chair as "Most Worthy Golden Rodent", (3) ‘salaam’,

1. state their name and Dugout, Sector or title and (5) shall proceed only after recognition by the chair.

Rule 3. Debate shall be limited to five (5) minutes for each speaker, except by two-thirds (2/3) consent.

Rule 4. Not more than two (2) representatives from any one (1) Dugout shall be permitted to discuss any one (1) subject, except by two-thirds (2/3) consent.

Rule 5. Recognition shall be granted only once to any one (1) speaker on any one (1) subject. A rebuttal of not more than three (3) minutes may be permitted. Additional recognition may be granted by two-thirds (2/3) consent.

Rule 6. All resolutions originating in an Imperial Rendezvous Committee must be submitted to the Imperial Rendezvous office of the Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer in proper resolution form (IN TRIPLICATE), and must be typed or printed and must be signed by the Chairman and Secretary of the Originating Committee.

Rule 7. The Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer shall deliver all properly prepared resolutions to the appropriate Imperial Rendezvous Committee.

Rule 8. The Imperial Rendezvous can discuss no resolution, except by unanimous consent, until an Imperial Rendezvous Committee has reported the same. Resolutions referred to, but not favorably reported by such Committee are in order

and may be called up for consideration by proponents at the moment of discharge of such Committee.

Rule 9. Imperial Rendezvous Committees may originate such resolutions, as they desire to sponsor, which pertain to the subject with which they are charged. However, no resolution shall be accepted for consideration after 10:00 A.M. of the last day of the Imperial Rendezvous, except by unanimous consent of the members present.

Rule 10. Each Dugout shall elect a Chairman, who shall announce the vote of the Dugout. When a delegate thereof demands the poll of any Dugout, entitled to vote, the Chairman shall poll the vote of such Dugout without debate or discussion.

Rule 11. In viva voce voting on any subject before the Imperial Rendezvous, no person shall participate except full-accredited delegates and alternates acting as delegates, who have registered and paid the registration fee.

Rule 12. The unit rule of voting shall not be permitted.

Rule 13. Delegates and alternates of a Dugout which are indebted to Imperial Headquarters in any amount, except supplies for current or future sales, or delegates and alternates of the Dugout which have not complied with the Rules and Regulations shall not be seated and cannot vote in the Imperial Rendezvous until such indebtedness has been paid and/or establish compliance with the Imperial By- laws, Rules and Regulations.

Rule 14. Voting shall be given by viva voce, except when a roll call is demanded by the Imperial Golden Rodent or his designated replacement or by at least three (3) Dugout units, except in the case of election of Imperial Officers. All roll calls shall be numerically by Dugouts.

Rule 15. Nominations for Imperial Officers shall come from the Nominating Committee. The Imperial REG must receive Imperial Officer Candidate Applications not later than thirty (30) days prior to the Imperial Rendezvous.

Rule 16. The Chairman of the Nominating Committee will read the list of Officers to the Imperial General Business Meeting for consideration.

Rule 17. The Imperial General Business Meeting will vote to accept the Nominating Committee’s report. In the event, other candidates will be recommended, Imperial General Business Meeting will address each candidate individually.

Rule 18. Discussion of personal grievances, local conditions, or claims concerning one (1) individual only, with respect to his personal interest, shall not be in order before the Imperial Rendezvous but may be discussed before the Imperial Grievance Committee.

Rule 19. In conformity with the Imperial By-laws, the Imperial Officers shall serve as the Officers of the Imperial Rendezvous. The Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer shall serve as the Secretary of the Imperial Rendezvous.

Rule 20. The Imperial Iron Claw shall be the Sergeant-at-Arms of the Imperial Rendezvous. The Assistant Imperial Iron Claw, appointed by the Imperial Golden Rodent, shall assist him.

Rule 21. No person who has talked for or against any motion, resolution, or report on the Imperial Rendezvous floor shall be permitted to make a motion to table same. A motion to table is not debatable and shall require a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote. A tabled motion may be taken from the table, for reconsideration, by a majority vote.

Rule 22. No person shall be entitled to vote or act as a delegate or alternate unless they are a member of the National Order of Trench Rats in good standing.

Rule 23. The nomination, election and installation of the Imperial Officers designated by these By-laws shall be the last order of business of the last day of the Imperial Rendezvous.

Rule 24. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of Imperial Rodents. They shall be the three (3) junior Imperial Rodents and two (2) senior Imperial Rodents appointed by the Imperial Golden Rodent. No two Committee members shall be from the same Sector except in emergencies due to a lack of Imperial Rodents. The Chairman of the Nominating Committee will be the junior past Imperial Golden Rodent. The Nominating Committee shall elect a Secretary. No candidate for office shall be considered unless they appear before the Nominating Committee.

Rule 25. The following Committees are hereby provided as the Standing Committees of the Imperial Rendezvous. They shall meet at the call of the Imperial Rendezvous, the Imperial Golden Rodent, or the Chairman of the Committee, provided, however, such Committees shall not meet during the prescribed hours of the General Sessions except by affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Imperial Rendezvous Delegates present and voting. Each Committee Secretary shall notify all Committee members, and the Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer as to time and place of each meeting. Each Committee Chairman shall report the conclusion of his Committee in writing in whole or in part, to the Imperial Rendezvous when called for by the Imperial Golden Rodent, the report to be approved by a majority of the Committee. A Committee Advisor shall be assigned by the Imperial Golden Rodent to each Committee because of his knowledge of the subject under consideration; and shall be subject to the call of the Committee for advice or council, without the privilege of voting, unless such appointed advisor is a Delegate to such Committee. Only registered Delegates will be allowed to participate in Committee discussions. Each Committee shall consist of a Chairman selected by the Imperial Golden Rodent and an Advisor.

* 1. Committee on Credentials: This Committee shall consider all matters of credentials and determine the eligibility of all persons seated and voting and shall specifically notify the Imperial Rendezvous and delegates as to the number of votes to which each Dugout shall be entitled.
	2. Committee on Resolutions: This Committee shall consider all matters which are not referable to the other Imperial Rendezvous Committees and shall formulate and give expressions of thanks, appreciation or condolences in resolution form.
	3. Committee on Finance:

Para 1. This Committee shall consider those regulations dealing with NOTR finances and dues and the approval of the proposed budget with recommendations of the Imperial Trust on the proposed budget.

Para 2. There shall be a Finance Committee of five members. Three members shall be the Imperial Golden Rodent, the Imperial Silver Rodent, the Imperial Blue Rodent, and two appointments by the Imperial Golden Rodent

with the approval of the Imperial Council. The Imperial Finance Officer is the Chairman of the Committee. The Imperial Silver Rodent is the Vice-Chairman of the Finance Committee. The Imperial Bench Rat and the Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer are ex-officio members of the finance committee with no voting rights.

Para 3. The Imperial Finance Committee shall meet on a semi-annual basis.

The meetings shall be held within a twenty-four (24) hour period prior to each mid-year and pre-convention Imperial Council Meeting, or upon call of three (3) members of the finance committee and/or the Imperial Golden Rodent.

* 1. Committee on By-laws: This Committee shall give consideration to those resolutions, which pertain to proposed additions, changes or amendments to the Imperial By-laws. No resolutions or changes to the Constitution and By-Laws will be considered unless submitted to the Imperial Headquarters 120 days prior to the pre-rendezvous meeting of the Imperial Council.
	2. Committee on Membership: This Committee shall give consideration to all matters pertaining to membership.
	3. Committee for Awards: The Awards Committee shall have three (3) members, one of which shall be an elected chair Imperial Officer.

Rule 26. The Imperial Trust, at the mid-year meeting, shall make Imperial Rendezvous requirements. The Chairman of the Imperial Trust, shall select an Imperial Rodent who resides in the immediate area of the Imperial Rendezvous at least two years ahead of time. The nearest Sector and Dugout to that convention will provide assistance to the Imperial Rodent in acquiring appropriate accommodations for the Imperial Rendezvous. The Imperial REG will supply the necessary information needed to fulfill the needs of the NOTR for meeting space, regalia sales/registration, catering, etc.

Rule 27. Policy regarding Ritual Teams. At the annual Imperial Rendezvous, it shall be the responsibility of the Imperial Bubonic and Black Plagues to supervise the Ritual team. At the Imperial council meeting prior to the Imperial Rendezvous, the Imperial Golden Rodent shall appoint a committee of two (2) or more Imperial Rodents to monitor the ritual. A similar system of monitors is to be utilized by all subordinate bodies. The ritual will consist of three (3) phases: 1) First Degree: Obligation, 2) Second Degree (modified-no cords or blind folds), 3) Third Degree will consist of the School of Instruction.

**Section 9.** Imperial Executive Committee

**Section 9.1.** Composition and Election

1. The Imperial Executive Committee shall consist of the following Imperial Officers: Imperial Golden Rodent, Imperial Silver Rodent, Imperial Blue Rodent, Imperial Turquoise Rodent, Imperial Holy Rat, Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer (who shall serve as Secretary), and Imperial Bench Rat (who shall act as legal advisor), and also one (1) Imperial Executive Rat from each Sector in good standing to be recommended and/or endorsed from the membership thereof, and which has no legal indebtedness owing and due to the Imperial Headquarters. Each Sector shall also recommend and/or endorse an alternate.
2. The Sectors shall recommend and/or endorse an Imperial Executive Rat and an Alternate at the same time as their regular Sector elections whom will serve on the Imperial Executive Committee. The term of office of each recommended and/or endorsed Imperial Executive Rat shall be for one (1) year. In the event of the removal, death, resignation or inability to discharge the duties of his or her office the duties shall devolve upon the Alternate Imperial Executive Rat. In the event of any of the foregoing circumstances with respect to the Alternate the Sector at its next meeting, shall recommend and/or endorse his or her successor to serve the unexpired portion of the term of office. The newly recommended and/or endorsed Imperial Executive Rats and Alternates will be reported to the Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer for his records.

**Section 9.2.** Quorum

A majority of all the members of the Imperial Executive committee, entitled to vote, shall constitute a quorum.

**Section 9.3.** Voting

Each member of the Imperial Executive Committee shall be entitled to one (1)vote, except the Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer, Imperial Hole-y Rat and Imperial Bench Rat.

**Section 9.4.** Meetings

1. The Committee shall meet in the city where the Imperial Rendezvous is held, within twenty-four (24) hours immediately preceding and immediately subsequent to the Imperial Rendezvous. The post-Rendezvous Imperial Executive Committee shall conduct the routine business of committee appointments, approve appointments made by the new Imperial Golden Rodent and such other business as is referred to the Imperial Executive Committee by the Rendezvous, or any other pending action previously referred to the Imperial Executive committee for action, but it shall not conduct any new business that rightfully should have been presented to the Rendezvous.
2. The Imperial Headquarters shall hold at least one (1) additional meeting of the Imperial Executive Committee each year between Imperial Rendezvous in the hotel selected as Headquarters Hotel for the Rendezvous and may hold additional meetings by written consent of a majority of the members of the Imperial Executive Committee.
3. The Imperial Golden Rodent may call additional meetings of the Imperial Executive Committee at the Convention or by a two-thirds (2/3) written request of the Imperial Executive Committee.
4. A member desiring to speak before the Imperial Executive Committee must first obtain permission from the Imperial Executive Rodent representing his Sector and must have the unanimous consent of all Imperial Executive Rodents present.
5. (1) Each Imperial Executive Rodent shall submit a written report to Imperial Headquarters and the written report received by Imperial Headquarters no less than 30 days prior to the Annual Imperial Rendezvous. If the Imperial Executive Rodent notifies the Imperial Headquarters or his/her alternate prior to the timeline as set forth above in this section, then the Alternate Imperial Executive Rodent shall submit a written report to be received by Imperial Headquarters no less than 30 days prior to the Annual Imperial Rendezvous. In the event that the Alternate Imperial Executive Rodent is not notified as stated above in this section, then the Alternate Imperial Executive Rodent shall submit a written report to be received by Imperial Headquarters no less than 48 hours prior to the scheduled Annual Imperial Rendezvous, which ever applies.
6. (2) In the event the Imperial Executive Rodent or the Alternate Imperial Executive Rodent does not comply with Section 9. 4 (e)(1) then he/she shall not be seated.

**Section 9.5.** Mail Ballots

* 1. The Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer may use the mail ballot to conduct Imperial business between meetings of the Imperial Executive Committee.
	2. The result of each mail ballot shall be published in the first issue of the Imperial Bulletin following the completion of the ballot. The same report will be made at the next Imperial Executive Committee meeting. All ballots shall be kept by the Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer, open to inspection by any member of Imperial, in good standing, until the close of the following Rendezvous, and thereafter be kept in permanent files for three (3) years.

**Section 9.6.** Powers and Duties

1. Upon recommendation of the Imperial Golden Rodent, the Imperial Executive Committee may, for cause, upon two-thirds (2/3) vote, recommend that the Imperial Golden Rodent suspend any Charter for not over sixty (60) days, and may revoke any Charter effective when its action is approved by the Imperial Executive Committee.
2. The Imperial Executive Committee by majority vote upon the request of the Imperial Golden Rodent, or by a two-thirds (2/3) vote without such request, may terminate and declare vacant the office of any Imperial Officer appointed by the Imperial Golden Rodent, including any appointed member of the Imperial Finance Committee.
3. The Imperial Executive Committee shall not under any circumstances enter into a contract for employment with any Imperial employee or prospective employee which extends for a period beyond one (1) year, except by a two- thirds (2/3) vote of the Committee.
4. The Imperial Executive Committee may exercise such powers specifically granted an Imperial Executive Committee member by the terms of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Imperial Organization as now existing or thereafter amended, and such other and further powers may as lawfully exercised by a board of directors of a non-profit corporation, except such powers as may be expressly withheld, limited by or inconsistent with the Imperial Constitution and Bylaws, or any mandate of the last Imperial Rendezvous.
5. Upon recommendation of the Imperial Golden Rodent, the Imperial Executive Committee, by two-thirds (2/3) vote, may approve resolutions pertaining to legislation pending in the National Legislature, involving the interests and welfare of the veterans of the United States of America and their dependents, and in which it is urgent that the position of the National Order of Trench Rats, regarding such legislation be made known.

**Section 9.7.** Imperial Executive Committee

Except as hereinafter provided, no fare, mileage or per diem expense shall be paid to any Imperial Executive Rodent for attendance at a meeting of the Committee.

## ARTICLE 4 – IMPERIAL TRUST

**Section 1:**

The Imperial Trust shall be composed of all Imperial Rodents. They shall establish the policy for the management of the Life and Building Funds. They shall act as Trustees and guide the direction of all Funds. They may grant exceptions to these constitutions and By-Laws by a two-thirds affirmative vote of those in attendance at a meeting of the Trust. Any exceptions will be valid until the next Imperial Rendezvous and may only be changed permanently by resolution approved by the Imperial Council. They shall act as a body exercising good judgment and their collective wisdom to further the best interest of the NOTR.

## Section 2:

The Trust shall meet twice a year. At the first meeting, each year they shall elect a Chairman and a Secretary. A quorum shall be 51% of those registered and they shall establish their own operating Articles.

## ARTICLE 5 – IMPERIAL COUNCIL

**Section 1.** The Imperial Council shall be composed of all Imperial Officers, IERs and all Imperial Rodents.

**Section 2**. Full administrative powers shall be vested in the Imperial Council.

**Section 3**. A quorum shall exist where there is present a majority of those members of the Imperial Council who possess the voting power.

**Section 4**. The Imperial Council shall fill any vacancy in office, which may occur between meetings of the Imperial Rendezvous. Seniority shall be given due weight when making such selections.

**Section 5**. Any vacancy occurring in the Office of Imperial Executive Rat shall be filled by an Alternate Imperial Executive Rat and a new Alternate Imperial Executive Rat will be elected at the next Sector meeting. The Imperial Executive Rat and the Alternate Imperial Executive Rat will be elected at the annual Sector election meeting. The elected Imperial Executive Rat and alternate Imperial Executive Rat will fill out the Imperial Officer Candidate form and submit to the Imperial Headquarters for confirmation by the Imperial Nominating Committee at the next Imperial Rendezvous.

**Section 6**. The Imperial Council, at it’s first meeting following the Imperial Rendezvous, shall appoint an Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer and such Assistant Red Eyed Gnawers as necessary, an Imperial Bench Rat and an Assistant Imperial Bench Rat, an Imperial Nightingale, an Imperial Cure Rat, and an Imperial Hole-y Rat, and such officers to hold office at the pleasure of the appointing body.

**Section 7.** Any questions that may come up between meetings of the Imperial Council, which requires their action, shall be handled by means of a mail, phone or email ballot.

**Section 8**. The Imperial Council shall meet within one hour after the adjournment of the Imperial Rendezvous and immediately preceding the holding of the succeeding Imperial Rendezvous.

**Section 9**. The Imperial Council shall provide for the appointment and employment of such subordinate officers and employees as may be needed for the administration of the affairs of the National Order of Trench Rats, and prescribe their duties and emoluments. All questions affecting the election, eligibility and conduct of Imperial Officers shall be referred to and determined by the Imperial Council.

**Section 10**. At the meeting of the Imperial Council preceding the Imperial Rendezvous, the Council shall act as a Credentials Committee for the Rendezvous and shall appoint Finance Committee and a By-Laws Committee and such other committees for the Imperial Rendezvous they may find necessary.

**Section 11**. The duties of the various Imperial Officers shall be as follows: Imperial Golden Rodent - Supreme Head and Chief Executive Officer; Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer - Secretary and Treasurer; Imperial Silver Rodent - Senior Vice Commander; Imperial Blue Rodent - First Junior Vice Commander; Imperial Turquoise Rodent - Second Junior Vice Commander; Imperial Bubonic Plague and Imperial Black Plague - Master of Ceremonies and of the Ritual; Imperial Hole-y Rat - Chaplain; Imperial Historic Rat - Historian; Imperial Bench Rat - Judge Advocate; Imperial Iron claw - Sergeant at Arms and Imperial Guard; Imperial Cure Rat - Surgeon; Imperial Nightingale Rat - entertainment Chairman; Keeper of the Cheese (Capes and Robes).

## ARTICLE 6 – NOTR SECTORS

The term "Sector" may be utilized when referring to all Dugouts located in a Sector within a State. It shall have no political significance, however, will be the Administrative go-between dugouts and Imperial Headquarters.

## ARTICLE 7 – CHARTERS

**Section 1**. In addition to the revocation or suspension as provided in Article 16, Section 7 of these By-Laws, charters of Sectors and Dugouts may be suspended. This function rests with the Imperial Council.

**Section 2**. The Imperial Council may suspend any Sector or Dugout ceasing to function as a Trench Rat Sector or Dugout. This suspension may be lifted anytime during the next fiscal year by the presentation of satisfactory evidence that the Sector or Dugout is functioning. If this is not done, the Imperial Council may revoke the charter or place the Charter in permanent suspension.

**Section 3**. Whenever the charter of a Sector or Dugout is revoked it may only be reinstated as provided for in the constitution or by the submission of a new charter application.

**Section 4**. A Sector or Dugout with less than fifteen (15) paid-up life members, twenty (20) days prior to the Imperial Rendezvous, shall be declared inactive and not allowed to vote in the rendezvous.

**Section 5.** Merger of Two or More Existing Dugouts

1. Upon receipt of a letter of intention to merge from the Red Eyed Gnawer of the Dugout concerned, the Imperial Golden Rodent may approve their merger with the concurrence of the Imperial Council.
2. If one of the Dugouts is a non-functioning Dugout and cannot hold a legal meeting, the Sector Golden Rodent may require the Sector Red Eyed Gnawer or the Dugout Red Eyed Gnawer to poll the membership of the Dugout as to their wishes regarding the merger.
3. Upon receipt of a favorable report from the membership concerned, the Sector Golden Rodent shall then affect the transfer of the membership and the property of the non-functioning Dugout into the Dugout that is the survivor of the merger.
4. If no favorable report is received by the Sector Red Eyed Gnawer, and the Dugout is non-functioning, then Article 17, Section 8, of the Imperial Constitution and By-Laws shall govern the necessary action of the Sector Golden Rodent.

## ARTICLE 8 – RITUAL AND CEREMONIES

**Section 1**. The Imperial Council alone shall possess the right to adopt, prescribe, change and amend the Ritual and Ceremonies of the National Order of Trench Rats. The Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer or a person designated by him, shall check all candidates.

**Section 2**. The Imperial Council thereto shall furnish each Dugout two copies of the Ritual and Ceremonies. The custodians of these shall be the Golden Rodent and the Red Eyed Gnawer of the Dugout in question. They shall keep them inviolate and in a safe and secret place. The only Rituals and Constitution and By-Laws that shall be used are those prescribed by the Imperial Council.

**Section 3**. Each Dugout shall be held strictly accountable by and to the Imperial Council for its due and unfailing observance of all Ritual and Ceremonies.

**Section 4**. No Dugout shall present a full membership card to a scavvie until they have received all three degrees of this order.

## ARTICLE 9 – SECTORS

 **Section 1**. To be recognized by the Imperial Council and to operate as a Sector in any state, officers shall be elected at a Sector Rendezvous each year by all the Dugouts present. Their eligibility to hold office shall be as Past Sector Golden Rodents or Past Red Eyed Gnawers of a Dugout. Their duties shall be to keep the existing Dugouts active and to form new Dugouts within the Sector and to hold a rendezvous within the Sector a minimum of two (2) times within the year. They shall confer with and be responsible to, the Imperial Executive Rat of the Sector.

**Section 2**. Where there is no Imperial Officer and no Dugout within a Sector, the Imperial Golden Rodent may appoint a Sector Golden Rodent. Where there is one or two Dugouts in a Sector, the Imperial Golden Rodent may appoint a Sector Golden Rodent and Sector Red Eyed Gnawer. The appointments will be subject to review by the Imperial Golden Rodent. Sectors with three or more Dugouts may appoint a Red Eyed Gnawer and a Bench Rat and elect a Golden Rodent, Silver Rodent, Blue Rodent, etc., at their Sector Rendezvous in accordance with the number of Dugouts in good standing (3 Dugouts - 3 Officers) up to the number and in rank according to those of the Imperial Chair Officers, providing at least three Dugouts are present to elect the officers. The remaining chair officers will be filled by appointment of the Sector Golden Rodent who shall make such appointments in an order that each Dugout shall have representation in the Sector. For voting purposes, each Dugout shall have one vote. The Sector Red Eyed Gnawer shall notify the Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer within 30 days after the election of the name and address of the officers. Elected Sector Officers should serve in each office for a term of one year, but no more than two years.

**Section 3**. Those Sectors with large numbers of Dugouts and geographical distances exceeding 500 miles, may petition the Imperial Council to divide the State into Geographical Sectors within the State, provided there are not less than three (3) Dugouts in each of the Sectors.

**Section 4**. When a Sector has been duly formed, and recognized by the Imperial Council, the Imperial Council shall issue an appropriate Charter.

**Section 5**. All Sector accounts shall be in the name of the NOTR with the Sector Name. No funds shall be kept in any personal accounts. All accounts must require any two of three signatures. All Sectors shall furnish Imperial each year, along with their Annual Financial Report, one voided check or bank statement dated June 30, from all their accounts for the Imperial Records.

**Section 6**. All Sectors will add a separate sheet of paper explaining their expenses and income to their annual finance report and shall conform to the guidelines established by the National Order of Trench Rats or they shall be subject to suspension of their Charter for failure to comply with this mandate

**Section 7**. Each Sector shall adopt its own Constitution and By-Laws, provided they shall in no manner conflict with the Constitution and By-Laws of the National Order of Trench Rats, and will be sent to Imperial Headquarters for the approval by the Imperial Bench Rat.

## ARTICLE 10 – DUGOUTS

**Section 1**. Those who desire to form a Dugout shall apply for a charter to Imperial Headquarters. Whenever the Imperial Council approves such application, the Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer shall forthwith issue the necessary charter over his signature and that of the Imperial Golden Rodent. Imperial Council may, however, delegate approval of charters to the Imperial Golden Rodent and the Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer.

**Section 2**. The Imperial Council shall not approve an application for a charter from those seeking to establish a Dugout in either a town, or a city wherein a Dugout is already located, except in cities with a population of 1,000,000 or more shall be entitled to more than one but not more than four Dugouts subject to approval of the Imperial Council.

**Section 3**. Fifteen (15) or more eligible persons may apply for a Charter to form a Dugout.. The application must be accompanied by a Charter fee of $10.00 and dues (minimum part life $30.00) for each name appearing on the application with an email address as available.

**Section 4**. Dugouts shall have no names either prefixed or suffixed to them, but shall be known solely by the numerical designation given at time charter is issued to them.

**Section 5**. The officers of a Dugout shall correspond both in number and in name to those of the Imperial Council, with these two exceptions; that first the term "Imperial" shall be dropped and never used, and secondly, that no such office as that of Executive Rat shall exist.

**Section 6**. Each Dugout shall adopt its own Constitution and By-Laws, provided they shall in no manner conflict with the Constitution and By-Laws of the National Order of Trench Rats, and will be sent to Imperial Headquarters for the approval by the Imperial Bench Rat.

**Section 7**. Each Dugout must submit an Annual Officer Report to Imperial Headquarters within 10 days after installation. Failure to submit such reports at the proper time shall prohibit the seating of the Delegates of a Dugout at the Annual Business Meeting of the National Order of Trench Rats. Failure to furnish such report may lead to suspension and/or revocation of the charter of a Dugout.

**Section 8**. All Dugout accounts shall be in the name of the NOTR with Dugout Number. No funds shall be kept in any personal accounts. All accounts must require any two of three authorized signatures. All Dugouts shall furnish Imperial each year, along with the Annual Financial Report, one voided check or bank statement dated 30 June from all their accounts for the Imperial Records not later than 1 October of each year.

**Section 9**. All Dugouts will add a separate sheet of paper explaining their expenses and income to their annual finance report and shall conform to the guidelines established by the National Order of Trench Rats or they shall be subject to suspension of their Charter for failure to comply with this mandate.

## ARTICLE 11 – REGALIA

 **Section 1**. The Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer and those appointed by the IREG to the responsibility of ordering, receiving, mailing, maintaining an up to date inventory and accounting for all funds spent and received for regalia, shall posses the right to adopt, prescribe, and change the regalia. Suggestion/Recommendations will be considered from members of the Imperial Board and Imperial Council, when submitted to the Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer in writing. Any other form of the National Order of Trench Rats brand is strictly prohibited, without written permission from Imperial Headquarters.

**Section 2**. Each Dugout or member of the organization and from no one else shall procure the fez, the lapel insignia, and any other regalia or paraphernalia adopted by the Imperial Council from Imperial Headquarters.

**Section 3**. The only recognized regalia for the National Order of Trench Rats shall be a fez as prescribed in Article 11 of these By-Laws.

**Section 4**. In order that all fezzes of Trench Rat members may be uniform and made in the fashion conforming to the true meaning of same, all fezzes shall be purchased through the Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer.

**Section 5**. The regulation Fez for Dugout members will be Royal Purple in color with the Red Rat embroidered on the front and with a Red (9”) Tassel, Golden Rodents of local Dugouts shall wear the Purple Fez with the Gold Rat and a Gold (9”) Tassel. The recognized elected and appointed Sector Officers shall wear a Maroon Fez with a Red Rat and a Red (18”) Tassel. Sector Golden Rodents shall wear a Maroon Fez with a Gold Rat and Gold (18”) Tassel. Past Sector Golden Rodents may wear a Black Fez with a Red Triangle with a Gold Rat and Gold (18”) Tassel and a Past Sector R.E.G. may wear a Black Fez with a Gold Triangle with a Red Rat and Red (18”) Tassel. The Imperial Golden Rodent shall wear a White Fez with a Gold (24”) Tassel and a Tri-color on the front with the words "Imperial Golden Rodent" beneath it; Imperial Council Officers shall wear a White Fez with Red Rat and White (18”) Tassel for Chair Officers and Red Rat and Red (18”) Tassel for Executive Officers.

**Section 6**. Imperial Officers, Sector Officers and Dugout Golden Rodents shall have the right to wear their distinctive fezzes after their term of office has expired only when the word "Past" has been placed below the rat on the fez. The letters will be in Gold for Past Golden Rodents and in Red for Past Imperial Officers and Past Sector Officers. Imperial Golden Rodents, on becoming members of the

Imperial Trust, will place the words "Imperial Council" in Gold beneath the Tri- color on their White Fez. No other mask, word, or insignia of any kind other than above shall be worn on any fez.

**Section 7**. Dugout Red Eyed Gnawers who have served one complete year may purchase from Imperial Headquarters a purple patch with gold letters P.REG that is placed on their fez below a red rat or in place of the "Past" below a gold rat.

## ARTICLE 12 – MEMBERSHIP

**Section 1**. Any veteran with a General discharge or above is eligible for membership in the National Order of Trench Rats, and who by their personal work, aid, help, effort, sacrifice and service, has shown their devotion to the best interest and welfare of veterans, their dependents and survivors. Associate members are to be family members of current or former NOTR members over the age of 18.

**Section 2**. There shall be none other than active members and dues shall be payable for life, with the exception that every Past Imperial Golden Rodent shall be awarded a GOLD Life Membership Card by the National Order of Trench Rats.

**Section 3**. Membership by application is encouraged. An eligible person may become a member only by written recommendation of a member who will vouch that they meet the eligibility requirements.

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

**Section 5**. The name of a rejected candidate shall not be divulged to any person not a member.

**Section 6**. Dual Membership may be permitted in more than one Dugout but not in the same sector with the exception to form a new Dugout. A member holding dual membership can be a delegate from only one Dugout at an Imperial Rendezvous. Dual membership may be defined as having a Membership in two or more Dugouts.

**Section 7**. The Imperial Council shall have the right to suspend Sections 3 and 4 of this Article if, in their opinion, such action is both necessary and expedient in order to organize and establish a Dugout in an isolated or hitherto unrepresentative locality.

**Section 8**. Any person eligible for membership as required may become a life member of the NOTR by the payment of a lump sum as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Up to age 80 on July 1st | $150.00 |
| 81 and over on July 1st | $ 00.00 |
| Associate Members | $ 75.00 |

**Section 9**. Partial payment of not less than thirty dollars ($30.00) may be made provided that the balance of the life membership fee must be paid "within (2) two years from the date of the application or all partial payments will be forfeited."

 **Section 10**. Any member in good standing in a Dugout may make application for transfer to any other Dugout and if accepted by the receiving Dugout shall be issued a letter of acceptance by the Red Eyed Gnawer of the Dugout. A new membership card may be requested from Imperial Headquarters, with a five dollar administrative fee.

**Section 11**. Any member in good standing as a member-at-large may make application for transfer to any Dugout and if accepted by the receiving Dugout, the Red Eyed Gnawer shall notify Imperial Headquarters by forwarding an approved transfer slip.

**Section 12**. There shall be no other membership dues other than Life Membership in the N.O.T.R. as that listed in Article 12, Section 8 above.

**Section 13**. Associate members have voice with the right to vote and may hold an appointed office only. The associate membership fees will be half of regular membership.

## ARTICLE 13 – IMPERIAL HEADQUARTERS

**Section 1**. The National Headquarters of the National Order of Trench Rats shall be located at a location convenient for the Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer and approved by the Imperial Council. Such address will be published on the title page of this constitution and By-Laws.

**Section 2**. Sectors and Dugouts are encouraged to incorporate themselves to minimize individual liability of their Officers and members and to assure that they can take full advantage of tax-exempt laws.

## ARTICLE 14 – IMPERIAL FINANCES

**Section 1**. The Imperial Council may authorize a fund-raising project or drive for the National Order of Trench Rats after approval the NOTR Imperial Headquarters.

**Section 2**. Local Dugouts and Sectors shall not conduct any Fund-Raising project or Fund-Raising activity without the prior consent of the NOTR Imperial Headquarters.

**Section 3**. If any Dugout or Sector desires to hold any Fund-Raising project or Fund-Raising Activity before requesting approval as provided in *Section 2*, it shall give written notice of its intention to seek such approval with reasonably full information about the proposed drive or activity to the Imperial Headquarters located in the territory in which it intends to raise funds not less than two weeks before seeking.

**Section 4**. Any Dugout, which shall conduct and finance a Fund-Raising project without prior approval, shall be subject to revocation of charter.

**Section 5**. Following the completion of approved Fund Raising, the Dugout or Sector shall submit to Imperial Headquarters a report of such Fund Raising along with a remittance of 10% of the NET gains.

**Section 6.** Dugouts and Sector Bank Accounts: All bank accounts shall be in the name of the NOTR with the Dugout or Sector name on account. No funds shall be kept in any personal accounts. All accounts must require any two of three authorized signatures. All Dugouts and Sectors shall furnish to Imperial each year an account statement or one voided check with their Annual Financial Report.

**Section 7.** Any Dugout or Sector that has accumulated funds over $50,000 shall bond all officers for three times the amount and send proof of such bond to Imperial Annually. Any Dugout or Sector that has over three times their annual budgeted expense and who does not conform within one year will be just cause for Imperial to suspend said Charter.

**Section 8**. Dugout and/or Sector Audit or Investigation: If this action is necessary, and found that problem(s) did justify this action by Imperial, all cost of such will be at the expense of the Dugout/Sector. The Dugout/Sector will pay such expense within 30 days of notice or will be suspended until such is recovered.

**Section 9**. It is the responsibility of every Dugout and Sector to apply to the Internal Revenue Service for an Employer Identification Number (EIN). Once the EIN is received, the Dugout and Sector will notify Imperial Headquarters so their EIN number may be added to the Imperial Group exemption with the IRS and establish tax-exempt status for their Dugout and Sector. The Dugout and Sector will also apply to the appropriate state agencies to register their Group Tax Exemption number for their tax-exempt status within their state. Copies of these approvals will be submitted to Imperial Headquarters.

**Section 10**. It is the responsibility of each Dugout and Sector to file their annual finance report to Imperial Headquarters to be included in the Imperial Group Tax report to the IRS. A schedule must be attached to the report to explain income and expenditures were indicated.

## ARTICLE 15 – SOURCES OF INCOME

**Section 1**. The revenue of the National Order of Trench Rats shall be derived from membership dues and such other sources as may be adopted or approved by the Imperial Council.

**Section 2**. Dugouts may collect membership dues and, upon receipt, must immediately forward to the Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer without offset.

**Section 3**. The fiscal year of the National Order of Trench Rats shall begin July 1st and shall end on June 30th of the following year.

## ARTICLE 16 – DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

**Section 1**. The Imperial Golden Rodent may suspend or expel any member of the National Order of Trench Rats for violation of their obligations or for any act unbecoming a member of this organization.

**Section 2**. This proceeding shall be done in open hearing. The accused shall be presented with a copy of the charges brought against them in writing and signed by the complainant, or complainants, at least 60 days before their hearing.

**Section 3**. The accused may make an appeal from any finding or order of the hearing body to the Imperial REG at its next regular meeting. A written notice of appeal must be filed by registered mail with the Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer within 30 days after mailing of notice of such finding or order by the hearing body.

**Section 4**. The Red Eyed Gnawer shall keep a Roll of Suspension and/or Expulsions containing the names of all suspended or expelled members and make a report to the Imperial Council immediately upon conviction of any member.

**Section 5**. The Imperial Council shall have the right upon two-thirds vote to revoke the charter of any Dugout for disobedience, or any act which may be deemed as detrimental to the welfare and the interest of the National Order of Trench Rats.

**Section 6**. Dugouts whose charter have been revoked by the Imperial Council may appeal for reinstatement at the next following Imperial Rendezvous, at which

time they shall state fully the details on which they rest their appeal either by letter or in person.

**Section 7**. When the Imperial Council shall revoke a charter of a Dugout and Sector, all property of the Dugout and Sector shall be returned to Imperial Headquarters.

**Section 8**. Any member of the NOTR may be placed permanently into the At-Large Dugout by the Imperial Council for the failure to comply with orders of the Imperial Council or orders made with their authority.

**Section 9**. The penalty for wrongful sponsorship is expulsion.

**Section 10**. The Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer (and/or the Imperial Golden Rodent) may suspend the Charter of any Dugout or Sector for a period of up to 180 days pending the approval of the Imperial Council.

**Section 11**. Upon any Dugout/Sector notification of Suspension, all funds and bank statements will be mailed to Imperial Headquarters within 15 days. These funds shall be held by Imperial until either the Suspension is removed or Revocation of Charter is approved. If Suspension is removed, Imperial will return all funds and records to the Dugout or Sector. Failure to comply may result in Trustee’s being assigned to act on behalf of the Imperial Council.

**Section 12**. The expenses for an audit or investigation and hearings into the conduct of a Dugout or Sector by Imperial shall be paid by the Dugout or Sector concerned if it is found that the action was justified. The Dugout or Sector will pay such expenses within 30 days or the suspension will continue until the amount is recovered.

**Section 13**. Any member of the Imperial Trust who is Suspended may be placed in permanent ‘LIMBO’.

## ARTICLE 17 – AMENDMENTS

**Section 1**. These By-Laws may be amended at any Imperial Rendezvous by a written resolution submitted to the Resolutions Committee and forwarded to the By-Laws Committee, and a vote of two-thirds of the total authorized representation there. Final approval will be made by a majority vote of the Imperial General Business Meeting.

## ARTICLE 18 – MISCELLANEOUS

 **Section 1**. The National Order of Trench Rats changed their mind-set many years ago to allow female Veterans the opportunity of membership into the organization. The Imperial Council has approved the calling of male members to be addressed as BROTHER, and female members to be addressed as SISTER. Any and all documents of the National Order of Trench Rats will reflect the same. The Imperial Bench Rat shall be authorized to make minor Housekeeping changes to these by-laws without changing the effect and rules of these by-laws.

**Section 2**. The National Order of Trench Rats will not tolerate any malicious form of discrimination, including racial, religious, gender, age and sexual orientation. Moreover, the organization does not endorse or tolerate any initiation rituals of hazing or harassment of any kind other than benign handshakes, an orientation including a school of instruction related to voting procedures, passwords, and organizational procedures. Violations will be subject to disciplinary action which may also include forfeiture of membership in the National Order of Trench Rats.

AS ADOPTED AT THE ANNUAL IMPERIAL RENDEZVOUS AT

Las Vegas, Nevada on January 16, 2023

 *Jeff Carson*  *Fred Powers, Jr., IR 94*

Imperial Golden Rodent Imperial Red-Eyed Gnawer

 *Charles Pettigrew, IR97*

Imperial Bench Rat

1/23