



## **Irene Trowell-Harris, R.N., Ed.D.**

## **Department of Veterans Affairs**

Washington, D.C.

Irene Trowell-Harris, R.N. Ed.D., was nominated to be Director of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Center for Women Veterans in June 2001 and approved by the White House on October 2, 2001. In this role, she is the primary advisor to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on programs and issues related to women veterans.

Prior to her appointment, Dr. Trowell-Harris served as Director of VA's Office of Inspector General's Healthcare Inspections Regional Office in Washington, D.C. In this position, she directed a multidisciplinary staff of inspectors responsible for conducting oversight reviews to improve the economy and the effectiveness and efficiency of VA's programs.

Concurrent with her position in VA's Office of Inspector General, Dr. Trowell-Harris served 38 years in the U.S. Air Force/Air National Guard (ANG), retiring as a Major General in September 2001. During her military career, Dr. Trowell-Harris held numerous positions, including chief nurse executive; flight nurse examiner; commander; advisor for nursing and readiness; assistant to the director, ANG; and military representative to the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services for the ANG. She was a 1997 Air Force representative for the Committee on Women in the NATO Forces Conference held in Istanbul, Turkey.

Dr. Trowell-Harris is an adjunct graduate faculty member at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, and serves as an ex-officio member to the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services for VA. She also served as a senior policy specialist for the American Nurses Association.

Born in Aiken, S.C., Dr. Trowell-Harris is a graduate of Columbia Hospital School of Nursing, Jersey City State College, where she earned a bachelor's degree with honors in health education. She earned a master's degree in public health from Yale University and a doctorate in education from Teachers College, Columbia University.

A recipient of the Air Force Distinguished Service and Legion of Merit awards, Dr. Trowell-Harris was the first African-American female in the history of the National Guard to be promoted to general officer. She is also the first to have a mentoring award named in her honor and to have a Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., Chapter named in her honor. In addition, she is the recipient of the Dr. James D. Weaver Society Award, named for the distinguished Pennsylvania Congressman and Air National Guard Flight Surgeon. She was inducted into the Columbia University Nursing Hall of Fame and the Yale University School of Medicine Honor Roll for her dedication to public service. Dr. Trowell-Harris was honored as one of the "21 Leaders of the 21st Century" by Women's eNews. She is a Distinguished Alumna of Yale University and Columbia University. Dr. Trowell-Harris received the Eagle Award from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University for her contributions to aviation.

Dr. Trowell-Harris received the VA Outstanding and Invaluable Service to the Community Award, Outstanding Performance Award, Congressional Recognition, Office of Inspector General performance awards, and special recognition from VA Central Office Federal Women's Program Committee.



**Director, Center for  
Women Veterans**