



A PASSION FOR PEOPLE

Cherissa Jackson, also known as “America’s Combat Nurse,” is truly dedicated to helping veterans get relief with cannabis.

PLEASE WELCOME TO THE TWENTY22MANY VETERAN Chronicles, one of the hardest working activists in the country. The story of Cherissa Jackson—a woman, mother, veteran, advocate, and warrior—is bound to inspire you. It is truly an honor to introduce you to such an amazing individual.

Jackson is a U.S. Air Force retired veteran who has served 23 years of active-duty military service, with 10 of those years as a nurse. She is now recognized as a U.S. Air Force combat veteran. She has served her country

three different times in combat deployments in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Jackson eventually became known as “America’s Combat Nurse” because of her extensive combat experience. Needless to say, her accomplishments are absolutely incredible.

After leaving her service in the U.S. military and stepping into a civilian role, Jackson became an ambassador and advocate for people suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Her accolades are many and a true testament to her support and advocacy for veterans and people everywhere.

In 2016, Jackson wrote *At Peace Not in Pieces: Powering Through My Pain*, a personal memoir of how she has learned to cope with her own PTSD symptoms. According to the *American Nurse* journal, Jackson embarked on a mission with SHEROES United and traveled to Rome, Italy in 2016 to discuss the ongoing stigma of PTSD, and where she coordinated with the Vatican, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the city of Amatrice, Italy. Jackson has also traveled to Uganda on a humanitarian medical mission with Project Give Hope, where she brought school supplies, shoes, rice, sugar, soap, and other necessities.

Jackson was named one of “25 Individuals of Influence” in the June 2018 issue of *PTSD Magazine*. She was also a Nightingale Award Winner at the 2020 Star Nurses Awards, presented by *The Washington Post* and American Nurses Association. Jackson also holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from the Medical University of South Carolina and was recently accepted into the University of Maryland Masters of Science program in Medical Cannabis Science and Therapeutics. >>

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In regards to cannabis activism and advocacy, Jackson is one of the hardest working activists I have ever known. She is an amazing breath of fresh air and representation of dedication, which she displays day in and day out. Last year, Jackson created a virtual conference called the AMVETS HEAL Program Veterans Alternative Healthcare Summit, which was held on June 27, 2021. There, she discussed the efficacy of medical cannabis and how it can save the lives of veterans.

Most recently, Jackson is the founder and CEO of We Decode, a company that provides predictive and personalized whole health suggestions for optimal health while using cannabis. The organization's DNA tests and genetically aligned cannabis formulations provide a faster approach to treatment that help to avoid delays in care while saving veterans time and money and creates a better experience for her customers. No longer will veterans have to endure months of trial and error from taking products that aren't a positive and effective experience. No longer will veterans have to spend thousands of dollars on products that don't work or treat their symptoms of pain, anxiety, stress, loss of sleep, and PTSD. We Decode takes the guesswork out of selecting what type of medical cannabis will work best.

This past May, I had the honor of sharing the same stage with Jackson at the 2022 Cannabis Science Conference West in Long Beach, California, as she moderated the discussion on veterans. Amidst her busy schedule, Jackson took time to discuss medical cannabis, veterans, and the end of prohibition.

High Times: Someone joining the military today is more likely to die from suicide than in combat or a training accident. Why do you think this is happening?

Cherissa Jackson: [The] military is not the only career where suicide is at a high rate. Many veterans take their lives after military service because of the "invisible scars" of war that many don't get treatment for after leaving the military.

What's the single most important piece of legislation you have worked on for cannabis legalization or veterans' access to medical cannabis? [The] Veterans Medical Marijuana Safe Harbor Act.

"Plant medicine has been around for centuries, and patients should feel empowered to choose this option."

- Cherissa Jackson

You are a decorated combat nurse. Do you believe cannabis will change the medical world as we currently know it once it's allowed to play with the others in Big Pharma?

Absolutely, plant medicine isn't new. Many doctors and practitioners don't prescribe [cannabis] and aren't huge advocates because they aren't knowledgeable about its efficacy. Once we get the medical field on board and educated about the ECS [endocannabinoid system] and how cannabis is medicine, it will change how providers manage their patients. Plant medicine has been around for centuries, and patients should feel empowered to choose this option.

I can't begin to tell you how important your work is. Giving a veteran the knowledge to seek out the "right" cannabis strain is very special, especially because cannabis affects every human being differently. With that being said, is there a common or popular strain that keeps popping up in your searches?

Every patient is different and has different reasons for taking cannabis. It's important that consumers are educated about the cannabis plant so they can make an informed decision about their health and the best strain for them.

I ask every activist I have ever interviewed in the past two years this next question, and I have never received the same answer. Do you believe we will see an end to cannabis prohibition?

Yes, I believe it will happen, and it's the efforts of cannabis advocates and groups that will help this fight. It's only a matter of time, just like alcohol, that it will happen. I hope it will be soon. Veterans are dying while Congress is making this decision. Time is of the essence if we want to save veterans and change the trajectory of their lives with plant medicine. **HT**

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