



## **Mel Tillis, Country Music Legend**

*In the early 1950s, Lonnie "Mel" Tillis was an airman stationed in Okinawa, working as a baker. There, he began a performing career with a musical group called the "Westerners." Just one year after he was discharged from the service in 1955, Tillis' song "I'm Tired" was recorded by Webb Pierce, and his professional career as a singer-songwriter was launched. Tillis' songs over the decades have been recorded by artists such as Brenda Lee, Charley Pride, Ricky Skaggs, George Strait, and Kenny Rogers. In 1976, he was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame. Tillis still performs regularly at his theater in Branson, Mo., where he also works with the Branson Veterans Task Force.*