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## **Operation Military**

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### Operation Military

According to the Korean Military Service Act, every masculine gender of the Republic of Korea shall faithfully perform military service because Korea is a truce country that has temporarily ceased the war. In other words, the war is still underway. Almost all men in South Korea are reluctant to serve in the military because they have to spend almost 18 months in the military because of the only reason they have a masculine gender. The first step to entering the military is receiving a physical examination notice. All Korean males would receive notification of military service to their residence at the age of 19. The examination is a procedure to check whether the subject can conduct well in the military, and if they pass this test, they can join the army. Fred, the protagonist of this story, also received a physical examination notice when he turned 19. His friends also began to get stressed when they were notified one by one. However, as soon as Fred saw the notification, he snorted. Because he was going to college soon, he could postpone his enlistment until he graduated college. Therefore going to college was his first excuse to postpone the enlistment. However, he was not comfortable attending college because of his fear of going to the military someday. Also, he could not concentrate on his studies; his focus was all over the military. When he gets stressed, he suddenly gets curious about another excuse to postpone the military. So he searched up the Military Manpower Administration website to find out about the postponement of military enlistment. It was written that it could be postponed a maximum of five times and two years; however, the last sentence also said that there must be a valid basis. Thus, Fred pondered to make a reasonable excuse for delaying his enlistment.

#### *Episode one: Overseas Escape*

After long consideration, the conclusion was to postpone enlistment for one year and travel abroad for one year. This was because overseas travel was also included in the Military Manpower Administration site as a valid reason for delaying enlistment. So he planned to travel abroad right after graduating from college. He thought about which country to spend his year in. This trip is backpacking without any plans; it is only for postponing military enlistment. Finally, he decided to go to the Philippines and got permission from his parents. He persuaded his parents for many valid reasons, such as wanting to see and learn a wider world, wanting to rest a little because he finished college and that he would learn a lot even if it was a trip to go alone, and eventually got permission. When he gave a valid reason, he never said that he was traveling because of the postponement of military enlistment. As time went by, Fred left for the Philippines after graduating from college. He enjoyed the Philippines for a year. He slept, ate, and rested whenever he wanted. He didn't just play. He also went to a language academy in the Philippines and studied. He studied, but he worked hard without any stress because he thought it was a valuable time to postpone the military and stay here. Five months have passed, and Fred has adapted to life in the Philippines to some extent. He made a video call to his college friends after a long time. While chatting with friends, he started to talk about the military. Fred's friends said they had already completed a physical examination and were waiting to join the military. While talking like that, Fred asked his friends if he could be exempted from the military at all. And one of the friends told him that if a physical examination shows super obesity, the person cannot join the military. As soon as he heard that, Fred searched on the Internet. The Military Manpower Administration site stated that the military exemption weight was 240lbs. Fred was tempted to hear the news at first, but he was troubled again when he heard exemption weight. His weight is 130lb, so he had to gain more than 100lbs. Honestly, this was almost impossible for Fred because 100lbs means he has to gain almost one 6th grader's weight. So Fred thought about it in his room after the call with

his friends. "Can I gain 100lbs?" "How can I gain weight?" "What should I eat?" After muttering for a long time, he decided to gain weight starting tomorrow. Because he thought he could gain 100 lbs before returning to Korea and doing a physical examination. He felt that he had to eat continuously to gain weight. So he made his diet planner. He planned breakfast at 7 a.m., a protein shake at 10 a.m., three hours later, lunch at 1 p.m., three hours later, another protein shake at 4 p.m., three hours later, dinner at 7 p.m., and finally decided to eat the last shake of the day. He wondered if he could carry out this diet plan every day, but he was not in a situation to argue about it. So Fred planned his diet and went to sleep.

#### *Episode two: Operation Big Boy*

The following day, Fred went to the kitchen and prepared breakfast as soon as he woke up. He had a cup of milk, greasy bacon and sausages, fried eggs, and two peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for breakfast. For him, who doesn't usually eat breakfast well, it was a big breakfast. After finishing it, he had a protein shake as he planned. He only ate kimchi fried rice and one burrito for lunch because he already had a big breakfast and protein shake, so he was already full. And this was harder than he thought, so he skipped the second protein shake. For dinner, he ate cream spaghetti, steak, and salmon salad. He ate a delicious dinner meal. After eating dinner, he changed his planner. He erased all the protein shakes in his planner. He decided to gradually increase the amount of food he ate. Seven months later, Fred returned to Korea. And his family was astonished. This is because Fred, who went to the Philippines with a weight of 130lbs, returned 243 lbs, which means his plan was successful. He could now confidently go to the physical examination. He also proudly told his friends that he successfully gained over 243 lbs, so he does not have to go to military service. And as expected, his friends were shocked. After recharging his tired body and mind for a long trip, Fred confidently set the physical examination date the day after tomorrow. However, the next morning, Fred felt sick as soon as he woke up. In the morning, he vomited. He had an upset stomach. It's been so long since he ate Korean food, so he did not control and ate too much. So he suffered from an upset stomach all day long. The next day came, and it was the physical examination day. He woke up in the morning, ate moderately, and left the house for an examination. As he entered the examination center, thousands of men lined up tightly. Fred also took over his name and waited in line. Various tests such as height and weight were conducted in the laboratory. Finally, Fred's turn came. He measured his height first; height was not important to him now. Immediately after measuring his height, he stepped on a scale to weigh himself. This was the moment when Fred's efforts to gain weight by devoting a year appeared. Both of his feet were on the scale, and shockingly, his weight was 236 lb. He had lost 7lb because of an upset stomach just the day before the physical examination and lost weight rapidly. Therefore, he got diagnosed with active duty, which means he must join the military in six months. In other words, he has only six months left to think about excuses to not join the military. He felt like the sky was collapsing now. Because he tried not to join the military for a year, but his one-year effort was ruined due to an upset stomach the previous day. So he came home with a notice of active duty decision with anger. He was absent-minded. He thought he had wasted a year. He couldn't think of what to do now. He went to bed early without dinner to forget this reality.

#### *Episode three: Rainbow*

Fred has six months left, and he has to come up with a good excuse not to go to the military. He just randomly came up that he will become gay. He also thought he would not go to the military if he received sex-change surgery. However, less than an hour after he decided to become a woman, he gave up. There are several reasons; first, he was scared of surgery. Second, the surgery was too expensive, and third, he just thought it was unrealistic. Therefore he chose to give up quickly.

#### *Episode four: Feel So Holy*

Fred tried to gain weight and change his gender, but all failed. So, he sat on the sofa, turned on the TV, without any thoughts, because he felt gloomy about the fact that he has to go into the military. While turning the TV channel, suddenly news caught his eye. The news was about military service exemption. It said that the supreme court acquitted Jehovah's Witnesses of the evasion of military service. Jehovah's Witnesses is a millenarian restorationist Christian denomination with nontrinitarian beliefs distinct from mainstream Christianity. The court ruled that conscientious objection by religion was justified, and in conclusion, the believer was exempted from the military service. As soon as the news anchor finished talking, Fred changed his clothes and ran out of the house. He ran recklessly to the downtown area because he knew that most of the Jehovah's witnesses were in crowded places. He wandered from place to place and began to look for believers. While looking for such a long time, he finally found a believer walking around with flyers in his hand. Fred grasped the believer's hands and said he would believe in Jesus. Then the believer gave various papers to Fred and said that if he filled them out and submitted them tomorrow, he could become Jehovah's witness. So Fred brought the papers home and quickly filled them out. He was captivated by a tremendous joy that could not be expressed in words. Because, as a Jehovah witness, he could now be exempted from the military. Fred vowed to live a holy life as a true believer in the future. He fell asleep comfortably, and as soon as the next morning came, he looked into the application for exemption from military service. When an

application for exemption from military service is prepared and submitted to the Military Manpower Administration, it is reviewed and determined whether or not it is subject to the exemption. He found an application for exemption on the Military Manpower Administration website. He quickly typed it on a computer, and he confidently put "religious (Jehovah's Witness)" in the reason for exemption column. He was excited and sent his application for exemption to the Military Manpower Administration email. Two months later, an email finally came from the Military Manpower Administration; it was the moment Fred had been waiting for so long. He checked his email nervously, and the result was an exemption. The email said, "We grant military service exemption for religious reasons." As soon as he read the sentence, Fred screamed with tremendous joy. He thought this exemption was a reward for his efforts. After the shouting of joy, he changed and went out. It was Jehovah's Witness Church where he headed. He sat in the chapel and offered a prayer for the first time in his life. He didn't even know how to pray yet, but once he put his hands together, closed his eyes, and said thank you for not letting him go to the military, and prayed that he would become a faithful believer in the future and return home. And he informed his family and friends of the good news. And he vowed not to waste the year and seven months he earned from not going to the military.

*Episode five: Unlucky Snowball*

Eight years passed, and Fred turned 32 years old. After being exempted from the military, he lived at a weight of about 235lb, but he felt that his body was too heavy, so he went on a diet losing 35 lb and becoming 200lb. Even though he lost weight, he is still a big guy. He used a year and seven months that he earned by not going into the military well, and now he became the manager of a conglomerate. He was enjoying a stable job and a peaceful life. He attended Jehovah's Witness Church until he was 26 years old. After that, he didn't go out anymore. Because he thought that the Military Manpower Administration would not check whether he attended church faithfully as a real Jehovah witness or not, he was living a peaceful life now. Still, recently, he felt a little bored. Because he always went to work and came back home, he was bored no matter how peaceful it was. So he went to the gym and tried soccer, but it was hard to do physical exercise with a 200lb body. So he continued work and house on weekdays and watched Netflix all day long on weekends. Currently, on Friday at 6 p.m Fred was on his way home from work, so he was excited to think that he could rest on the weekend. He was still looking for another hobby or something interesting other than Netflix. Suddenly, he saw a bus with an unusual pattern on his way; it was a blood donation bus. Fred just tried to pass by, but the bus billboard said, "donate blood and get a free movie ticket and cupcake." He was tempted by the phrase and went straight to the blood donation bus. He planned to donate blood and watch a movie after a long time with cupcakes. He went to the blood donation bus, filled out several documents, and donated blood immediately. After the blood donation, he received a cupcake and a movie ticket. As he was about to leave, two men blocked his way. "You're Fred Lee, right?" said a man. Then Fred asked back, "Yes, but who are you?" Then the men handcuffed Fred out of nowhere, saying, "Mr. Lee, you're under arrest for evasion of military service." They were DPs (deserter pursuit) in the army catching deserters. They were investigating deserters as well as those who seemed to have exempted the army inappropriately. They were suspicious of Fred's military exemption for religion eight years ago and came to see if he had become a real Jehovah witness. However, Fred confirmed by donating blood, and they noticed at once that Fred was not a Jehovah's witness. Because, among the commandments of Jehovah's Witnesses, there was a unique commandment not to share blood with others. Therefore, Jehovah's Witnesses do not donate blood or receive other people's blood. However, Fred confirmed to them that he was not a believer by donating blood. Therefore he was arrested for an evasion of military service, fined \$5,000, and enlisted in the military. All 33-year-old men are exempt from the army due to their old age, but Fred is still 32 years old, so he is old enough to join the military. He raged because it was December now, and he could not have gone to the army if he had been caught a month late. The DPs gave Fred a military warrant, telling him to take the warrant to the Army Training Center exactly 14 days from now. The generous DPs gave Fred 14 days to get ready for the military. The DPs left, but Fred stood there blankly. He was angry that the military problem had held him back, which he thought was over. He turned home and glanced at the military warrant. He still didn't realize that he was going to the army. After the weekend, on Monday, he resigned and returned to work to clean up his house and resign. He wrote about his reason for resignation because he could not say that he was quitting the company because of the military. And he went back home, cleaned up, and organized things because his house would be empty for almost two years. He used 14 days to meet his families and friends, and no one he met believed that he was going to the military at once. Two weeks went so quickly, and Fred was in front of the training center. He walked silently, clenching the warrant.