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The New York Times

K-Pop in Uniform: All 7 BTS Members Are Doing Military Service

The last two members, Jimin and Jungkook, began their 18-month military duty in South Korea on Tuesday. Some fans say they should have been exempt.

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By Jin Yu Young. Reporting from Seoul.
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Fans of the K-pop band BTS have known for years that a day would come when its seven members would all be doing mandatory service in the South Korean military.

That day arrived on Tuesday. For many BTS fans, who happen to call themselves Army, seeing their favorite musicians enter the armed forces was as painful as they expected it to be. Any potential reunion concert, once the members have all fulfilled their military duty, is at least a year and six months away...

A typical enlistment in South Korea is 18 months... While able-bodied men over the age of 18 are required to serve in South Korea's military, some exemptions are made, including for Olympic champions and some classical musicians who win international competitions. Pop stars, however, are not eligible, a fact that sparked debate over whether BTS had earned one because of its contributions to South Korea's economy and cultural exports.

Source: Young, J.Y. Dec 12, 2023. "K-Pop in Uniform: All 7 BTS Members Are Doing Military Service." *The New York Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/12/world/asia/bts-military-service-south-korea.html>

