A PASSION FOR ADVENTURE

At DSTA, Alex Sharma develops cutting-edge technological solutions for Singapore's defence.

ALEX SHARMA

DSTA Scholarship
www.dsta.gov.sg

Age: 27

Attained: Bachelor of Engineering, Computer Science, NTU

Now: Engineer in DSTA Enterprise IT Programme Centre

From: Republic Polytechnic

Alex Sharma describes himself as an adventure seeker who is constantly up for a challenge. It was this hunger for new and exciting experiences, along with a passion for science and technology that motivated him to pursue the DSTA Scholarship. The scholarship offers dynamic and vibrant career opportunities within the Defence Technology Community.

'I decided to join DSTA as it would allow me to put my interest and knowledge in engineering to good use through providing leading-edge and innovative capabilities to strengthen Singapore's defence,' says the graduate in Computer Science from the Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

At NTU, he participated in overseas exchange programmes that broadened his horizons and helped to prepare him for his career. 'I learnt to be independent, resourceful and quick in reacting to challenges. These are useful traits as working in DSTA exposes me to new and challenging projects on a regular basis,' Alex says.

He recalls being tasked to give an opening speech in Mandarin at Chongqing University in China. 'This was especially difficult as Mandarin is not my mother tongue, and the last time I studied the language was in secondary school,' Alex explains. Nonetheless, he embraced the opportunity and managed to deliver the entire speech smoothly.

As an engineer in DSTA's Enterprise IT Programme Centre, Alex delivers data analytics solutions for the Ministry of Defence and the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF). Through the use of cutting-edge web technologies, Alex develops software solutions and evaluates how new technologies could be used to enhance existing capabilities or develop new ones.

Alex has also contributed to projects that support national endeavours as well. One such project is the development of a Contact Tracing Application – an intuitive user-interface system that allows analysts to identify infected patients' contact points during outbreaks such as the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) epidemic. Alex and his team received the DSTA Innovation Award for their work in developing this system. However, Alex emphasised that the intangible rewards of such projects mean more to him. 'There is a sense of accomplishment in being able to contribute to the well-being of the entire nation. These projects also encourage me to be innovative and think out of the box,' he says.

"A career in DSTA would be exciting and fulfilling for people who possess a passion for engineering, an interest in solving practical engineering problems and are intrigued by complex systems."

When asked to describe his work at DSTA, Alex elaborates, 'There are diverse work opportunities beyond typical information technology jobs. To acquire and develop effective systems that meet the unique requirements for our partners in MINDEF and the SAF, I have to possess an in-depth understanding of various software and hardware systems. This job allows me to develop technical competencies beyond computer science, which I truly value.'

To aspiring candidates interested in the DSTA Scholarship, Alex says: 'A career in DSTA would be exciting and fulfilling for people who possess a passion for engineering, an interest in solving practical engineering problems and are intrigued by complex systems. They must also have an open mind, embrace new challenges and enjoy the problem-solving process. Most importantly, they must find meaning in developing technological solutions for our nation's defence.' ❑