My Career in DSTA

"There is a strong culture of learning and innovation in DSTA, and opportunities to upgrade our knowledge and skills to contribute to Singapore's defence."

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AT THE FOREFRONT OF TECHNOLOGY

At DSTA, Tan Boon Tiang leverages his technical skills and creativity to develop leading-edge systems for Singapore's defence.

Growing up, Boon Tiang's love for computer games developed into an interest in software development and programming. Says the graduate of the National University of Singapore's School of Computing: "I have always been intrigued by how IT devices and systems work, and interested in finding creative solutions to make them work better."

It was this constant curiosity and passion for innovation that led Boon Tiang to a career at the Defence Science and Technology Agency (DSTA), where he develops Command and Control (C2) systems that provide the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) with better situational awareness and operational effectiveness. C2 systems are information systems that support commanders in planning, directing and coordinating the use of forces or resources. They connect the soldiers on the ground, sailors on the sea and fighter pilots in the sky so that they share the same level of situational awareness in the battlefield.

Boon Tiang's most memorable project is the "C2-in-a-stick" – a mini device which leverages Internet technologies to convert a computer monitor into a C2 system with no configuration work required.

Working in DSTA has provided Boon Tiang with ample opportunities to develop his expertise. He has attended conferences and courses in the US and UK to learn about the latest defence technologies, and learned much from the in-house training programmes which develop staff in engineering and business competencies. "There is a strong culture of learning and innovation in DSTA, and opportunities to upgrade our knowledge and skills to contribute to Singapore's defence," he says.

As part of his work, Boon Tiang also plays an active role to ensure mission success in ops training, such as at the recent Exercise Forging Sabre conducted in December 2015 in the US, which he describes as an exhilarating and priceless experience.

"Exercise Forging Sabre involved training the SAF to defend against air and land threats through counter-air and integrated operations. I led a team of defence engineers to ensure the performance of the command and control information systems at the exercise. The systems take in inputs from various sources for real-time situational awareness. This allows the commanders to make timely decisions during operations."

For Boon Tiang, witnessing the systems in action was especially fulfilling, as he got to experience first-hand how his contributions helped the SAF to achieve mission effectiveness.

When asked what he loves about his job, Boon Tiang says, "DSTA is at the forefront of technology, and there are abundant opportunities to use our technical skills and innovation to develop effective and unique capabilities to strengthen Singapore's defence."

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