

Col. Hardeep Singh Bedi, V.S.M. & Hi-tech Solutions

My tryst with computers began in 1970 when as a Major in the Indian army, I was nominated to attend the EDP course at the Faculty of Computer Technology in Mhow. Being a third generation army man, I had no technical background and was never interested in computers even during my NDA days. I scored miserably. Surprisingly however, I became an Instructor in the Faculty. That was when I began to like my affair with the machine. Barely four years later, I found myself teaching other officers the mysteries of IT.

Soon, I was nominated to develop softwares for the Chief of the Army Staff, Military Operations and Military Secretary's Branch at Army Headquarters. On promotion to the rank of Lt. Col., I was posted as the Joint Director, (Planning and Implementation) of the army's computer systems. It was here that the President of India awarded me the Vishist Seva Medal (VSM) for my role in implementing the Army's Automation Plan. In between, I also managed to develop an innovative machine for cleaning rank guns.

In 1994, my seniors decided to promote me to the rank of a full Colonel. I was asked to command my unit - the 72-Armoured Regiment, a dream any army officer would love to accomplish! But by then, I was already in love with IT. I decided to hang up my boots. When high-ranking Majors retire, they either become defence consultants or arms dealers. But I decided to float my own software company. With four people and Rs. 15,000 as seed capital, I launched Tulip Software Ltd. in November 1993.

However, our first break came in 1994 when we became prime re-sellers of Oracle. Earlier, this privilege was held by Tata Consultancy Services. This put us in a different league.

Today, the 320 employee strong company - probably the only software firm founded by an army officer - rakes in Rs. 85 crore in revenues. We provide high-end networking and connectivity solutions to Arthur Anderson, HDFC Bank, etc.

[Courtesy: *Hindustan Times*]

