# Personal Computers â€“ 25 Years and Counting â€“ Part VIII

## Description

Part VII talked about getting ready for the deployment to the Med/North Arabian Sea.

CH-46D VERTREP

I packed the Apple //c, the 9â€³ green screen monitor and the ImageWriter ][ in a footlocker (with padding) and off went. I know the computer was moved by VERTEP (vertical replenishment) (meaning it was on a pallet with other stuff, staged on a flight deck and picked up by a helicopter (usually CH-46D Sea Knights)) from a rolling, pitching deck, and deposited on another rolling, pitching deck of another ship 9 times. Yes, thatâ€™s right: NINE times.

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And that little Apple â€œportableâ€• kept on operating. Itâ€™s â€œoperational availabilityâ€• was 100%. We also moved a few more times by hauling the equipment down the shipâ€™s gangways and up others a few times, too.

I had gotten reasonable proficient with the integrated suite of programs of Appleworks (which, still exists for the Mac today) because of this cruise. As the Combat Systems Material Officer, I was responsible for helping the ships stay at the highest level of readiness possible. As equipment failed, and the shipâ€™s submitted their reports and parts requests, I was on the hook to figure out the status and keep the Commodore on the status of the repairs and parts availability. I set up a database in AW for tracking the repair parts and the estimated time the repairs would be effected.

I formatted a letter, where the body of the letter contained the current status of all casualties to the ships assigned to us. AW took care of inserting the most up to date data at printout time. All I had to do was maintain the database file when new information arrived. This sounds pretty mundane and routine for the current sate of the art of software and office suites today, but my point is in 1985, Apple had produced a very effective program to do this. Iâ€™m not sure if AppleWorks was the first of itâ€™s kind (see the Wikipedia article linked above â€œone of the firstâ€•), but as far as I can recall, it was. Another milestone development, from which many other companies have gone on to â€œemulateâ€• and market very well, but it was Apple software vision that most likely paved the way for all the other developments of Office software with integration.

Back in those days, Apple made the hardware and software. Years later, the software department of Apple was spun off as itâ€™s own company, Claris. Certainly the great advantage of writing software application within the company lead to exceptionally smooth operations for the end user.

We were standing â€œport and starboard, chow-to-chowâ€• watches, which meant two teams of us traded the watch when each mealtime came around. While on watch, if an update to a part status came in, I could hand annotate the info on page 1 (the casualty report status letter) of the Staff Watch Officerâ€™s Notebook. As soon as I got off watch, I would go and make any changes, then printout a fresh copy of the letter and go back to the watch station and replace the outdated page.

The trend of my learning, documented in this series, is that I learned programs and systems more effectively and quickly when I had to face a real challenge of my management time. I then would have excellent motivation to sit down and focus on the documentation for the program I needed to get the job done.

Next time: Owl Softwareâ€™s â€œGuideâ€• program and stepping up to a Mac

**Category**

1. History
2. Technology

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