The Resurrection Story of a Z-1GR

This story starts in Japan via Yahoo! Japan Auctions using a proxy buyer—Tenso (Buyee), in this case.

If you are unfamiliar with proxy-buying vintage electronics from Japan, the simple rule of thumb is to prepare to be misled and disappointed about 20% of the time.

The unit in question was advertised as fully functional—a rare sight, given that most items carry the "junk" (*janku* / ジャンク) label. In Japan, "junk" doesn't quite mean what it does in the West; it spans a broad spectrum ranging from untested or mildly defective to completely non-working, sold for parts, or strictly "as-is."

However, "fully functional" doesn't carry much weight, either. Vendors will occasionally post deceitful listings, knowing foreign buyers have zero recourse—especially with vintage hardware. In fact, this total lack of accountability is explicitly baked into Buyee's terms of operation.

Under Buyee's Terms of Service (Article 21) and Coverage Exceptions, Buyee operates strictly as a proxy purchasing service and *"does not conduct operational checks on electronic products"* nor *"guarantee the quality of items listed as junk."* Consequently, *"malfunctions involving electrical appliances"* and discrepancies in functionality are explicitly excluded from all compensation plans, regardless of the seller's claims.

So, when I opened the box and found a completely dead, corroded Z-1GR, I wasn't even surprised. It is what it is.

Not exactly “Fully Functional” in pictures







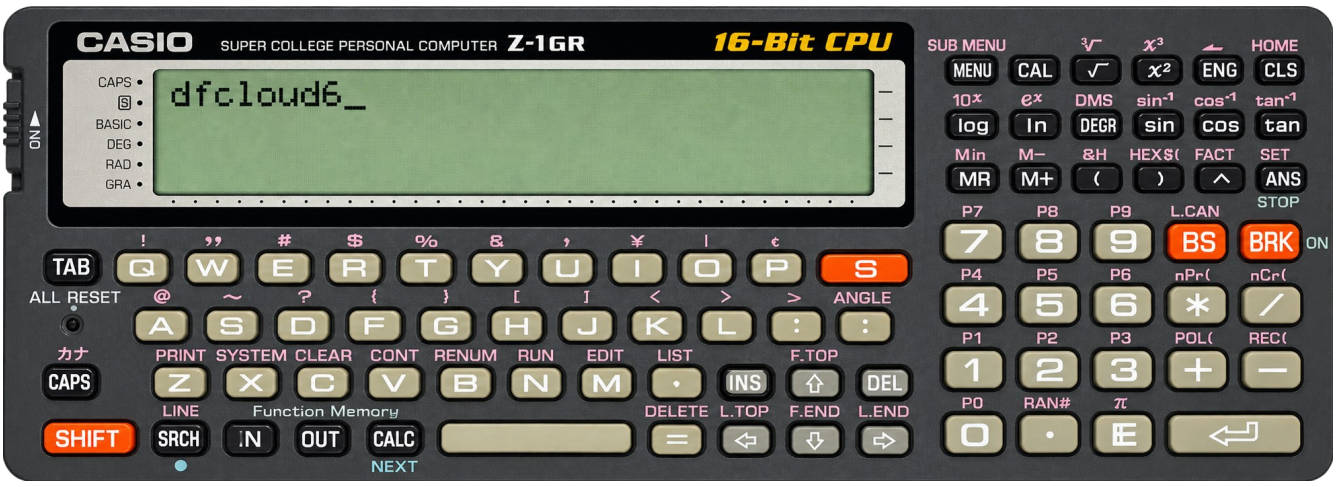
And then, it went to Valencia…

To visit Daniel Falcón, a highly skilled technician with a real talent for resurrecting dead hardware. Appropriately enough, the project title for this particular task was "Lazarus Z-1GR" (or maybe even Z-1GRa).

The original plan was simply to harvest it for parts and study its layout in preparation for 256 KB memory modifications. But the outcome was a total surprise: a fully working unit, brought back to life through sheer bench ingenuity.

Below is a photo of the revived machine, extracted and isolated from Daniel's Instagram feed courtesy of Sol 6.

We live in modern times.



You can find a larger set of before-and-after pictures on [Daniel’s Instagram]().

And then, it went to Poland...

It so happens that Piotr is considering resuming the reverse engineering of its math coprocessor—a project originally initiated by Rémy Rouvin, the author of PockEmul—so having another physical unit on hand comes in very handy.

Besides, it is always nice to gather all the pocket computers capable of connecting to the MD-120 disk drive—including one of the two MD-120 units restored by Piotr some time ago.

The End.

Acknowledgments

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Special thanks to Piotr and to Betka for her continued and loyal support.
All errors are human.

This work is freely shared with the vintage computing community. Please use it, build upon it, and cite the source.
Final.