

512 K EXPANSION MEMORY CARD FOR 9640 : MODIFY IT YOURSELF!
Paolo Bagnaresi, Italy, Jan. 16th, 1989

HOW TO MODIFY YOUR 512 K MYARC MEMORY EXPANSION CARD AND MAKE IT
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WORK WITH THE GENEVE COMPUTER

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If you have:

- a Myarc 9640/Geneve computer
- and a Myarc 512 K Expansion Memory originally released for the TI-99/4A, now collecting dust in a shelf, .
- then now you can modify it and enjoy half a Meg of additional memory on your 9640 computer.

Even if you already have your card modified by Myarc itself, you may want to read this document. Some cards badly modified by Myarc have already been released (mine for example) and yours may as well be one of them!

If you aren't able to understand why a new peripheral added to your system doesn't work, then you may want to check this document. You may find out that a Horizon Ram Disk doesn't work just because Myarc hasn't properly modified the 512 K card you plugged in several months ago (this happened to me too), or that your Horizon Ram Disk works only with the Myarc Floppy Disk Controller (and not with the CorComp). And, again, the culprit was the 512 K (yet another bug).

WARNING: CARD VERSIONS THIS PROJECT APPLIES TO

I don't know how many different versions of the 512 K card have been released by Myarc. I know for sure there are at least 2 versions of them. This project is good for both of them. Obviously, the two versions have some differences. Since there isn't any serial number or a name on the Printed Circuit Board, it's not easy to tell the one from the other by simply looking at a label. Let's then call them Version A and Version B. I will tell the differences between Version A and Version B later on, at STEP 6.

But what if the version you have is neither A nor B? There isn't much I can do about it: chances are that YOU WILL END UP WITH A CARD THAT WILL NOT WORK!

Why this document then? It is intended only for those who are not willing to send their cards to the Myarc Service Department and wait some months to have them back.

We in Europe suffer from the distance, the time and the money needed to get anything accomplished by Myarc. This is why I think some people in Europe, and maybe in some other foreign countries as well, will go ahead and try to execute this project, in spite of all the risks that it entails.

DISCLAIMER

Any unauthorized modification carried out on your 512 K card may invalidate the warranties provided by Myarc. No warranty is provided with this document, that you should not assume to be surely correct or suitable to the card version you own. You also are warned that any temporary or permanent damage caused to your system by the execution of the project shown in this document may be due to the unsuitability of the project to your particular case. Neither any responsibility will arise nor any liability, obligation will ever be ascribed to

Aw'rite guys, enough of this stuff.... if you don't want to risk, give up.

TECHNICAL SKILL REQUIRED

The person who can successfully carry out this project is a normal computer user with a minimum dexterity: he knows how to handle a soldering iron, has already undertaken some minor electronic projects, understands IC pin counting method and does not get confused about pin counting when flipping over a printed circuit board. Really, if you honestly feel you don't qualify, please give up and get the work done by Myarc: it's much safer, since a drawing of the project is not provided.

It's better to feel sorry now than to feel sorry later on, when a white cloud of smoke comes out of your beloved 512 K card (unlikely, but possible if you connect some ICs to the +/-12 Volts unregulated supply).

WHAT YOU WILL HAVE TO DO

You will have to cut some traces on the printed circuit board (PCB) and add some wires (jumpers) here and there. That's all.

LAST WARNING

The changes you are about to operate on the 512 K card are somewhat FINAL. After the modifications have been performed, your Myarc 512 K will not be able to work within a truly TI-99/4A system any longer. If you planned to switch the card between a Geneve system and a TI-99/4A system, then THIS PROJECT IS NOT FOR YOU!

In order to restore the card to its previous conditions (i.e. to make it work again with TI-99/4A), you will have to undo whatever you might have done, i.e. resolder back the cut traces and unsolder all the added wires. Although feasible, it's not practical.

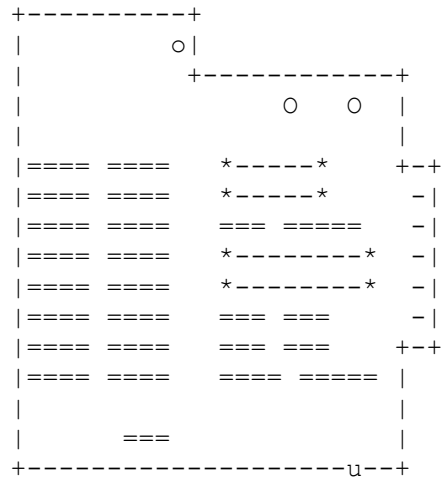
Start this project only if you plan to use the card exclusively in the Geneve environment.

STEP 1 - EQUIPMENT

- 1 Soldering pencil.
- 1 roll of fine (20 awg) rosin core solder.
- 1 foot of fine (30 awg) wire wrap wire.
- 1 1N4148 diode.
- 1 Sharp pointed knife.
- 1 Water-resistant, soft-tip, black pen.
- 1 Multimeter, optional.

- STEP 2 - Remove clamshell from the Myarc 512 K Printed Circuit Board (PCB).
- STEP 3 - Place the PCB on a table, with the component side upwards, the connector at your right hand side hand side and the protruding LED toward your chest.

This is what you should see:



COMPONENT DESCRIPTION

You should now see:

- 16 memories on your left hand side, divided into 2 equal rows of 8 memory each, "U1" through "U8" and "U9" through "U16" . Each memory has 18 pins and may be named either 4464, or 50464, or 41464, or 81464 or similar. They are all 256 Kbit (64K x 4 bit) DRAMs.
- 2 +5 Volts voltage regulators (7805), named "VR1" and "VR2", at right upper corner, fastened with nuts and bolts to the PCB.
- 4 electrolytic capacitors, near the above 7805.
- 1 Eprom (2764, 8K x 8 bits), the large and only 28 pin IC that is now in the upper half of the PCB, near the four electrolytic capacitors: it should be named "U26".
- 1 74LS139 (Dual 2 to 4 line Decoder/Demultiplexer), a 16 pin chip, named "U24", placed just below the Eprom "U26".
- 1 74LS245 (Octal bus transceiver with 3 state output), a 20 pin chip named "U25", placed just at right of the 74LS139 "U24".
- 1 TMS4500A (Dynamic Ram Controller), a 40 pin chip named "U23", placed just below the 74LS139 "U24" and the 74LS245 "U25".
- 1 74LS74 (or similar) (Dual D-Type, Positive Edge Triggered Flip-Flop with Preset and Clear), a 14 pin chip named "U19", placed just below and to the left of the TMS4500A "U23".
- 1 74LS11 (Triple 3 Input AND Gates), a 14 pin chip named "U22", placed just below and to the right of the TMS4500A "U23".
- 1 74LS74 (or similar) (Dual D-Type, Positive Edge Triggered Flip-Flop with Preset and Clear), a 14 pin chip named "U18", placed just below the 74LS74 "U19".
- 1 74LS04 (Hex Inverters), a 14 pin chip named "U21", placed just below the 7411 "U22".
- 1 74HCT259 (Eight Bit Addressable Latches), a 14 pin

- chip named "U17", placed just below the second 74LS74 "U18".
- 1 PAL12L6 (Programmable Logical Array), a 20 pin chip named "U20", placed just below the 74LS04 "U21".
 - 1 74LS00 (Quadruple 2 Input Positive NAND Gates), a 14 pin chip named "U27", placed below the 4464 memory chip columns "U9" - "U16".
 - 1 3.579545 MHz quartz, placed below the PAL12L6 "U20".

STEP 4 - CHECK THE COMPONENTS

You are required to check at all the components listed in STEP 3 and to compare them with the components you have in your own card. If they do not match, even on only one element, stop this project since you may own a card version different from those this project applies to.

Also, give up the modification if you come across any difference between your card and the descriptions of the cards reported later on in this document. Myarc has used either the "LS" type or the "HCT" type of the ICs on the PCB. If this is the only difference you find in your card, then go ahead.

STEP 5 - THE 60 PIN CONNECTOR

The card has a 60 pin connector, that is used when you want to insert it in the Peripheral Expansion Box (PEB). ODD pin #s (1 though 59) are located on the "Solder Side" of the PCB, and EVEN pin #s (2 through 60) are located on the "Component Side" of the PCB. Thus, each side of the board has 30 pins. The numeration starts from the four electrolytic capacitors side (lower numbers) and goes up toward the LED side (higher numbers).

If you look carefully at the 60 pin connector, you will notice that all the used pins are connected to the "Solder Side" of the PCB by the means of small elliptical solder pads. Therefore, the "Solder Side" of the PCB gives all the 60 possible contacts. Later on, when you will be required to run a jumper, let's say, from pin xx of the IC yy to connector pin # zz, and pin # zz happens to be on the "Component Side", you can solder the wire to the correspondent pad in the "Solder Side" of the PCB, thus avoiding messing wires running from one side of the PCB to the other.

Therefore, I would advise you to mark right away, with the help of a water-resistant soft-tip black pen, the correspondent numbers of all the following pins on the elliptical solder pads ON THE "SOLDER SIDE":

- 4 (READY).
- 56 (MEMEN.A*).
- 54 (WE.A*).

STEP 6 - CARD VERSION A AND VERSION B

Version A of the is the card that:.

- hasn't any 1N4148 diode connected to PIN 4 (READY) of the 60 pin connector.
- has only 2 solder holes (terminators) in the following jumpers: J2, J3, J5, J6.

Version B of the is the card that:

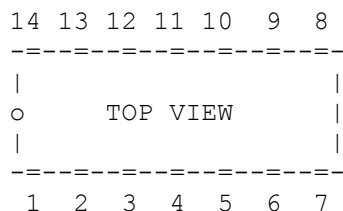
- has one 1N4148 diode connected to PIN 4 (READY) of the 60 pin connector. The diode is not identified on the PCB by a white mark as all the other components are, because it had been added later on. The diode is placed near the resistor "R5". If you have the 60 pin connector at your right hand side and the LED pointing toward your chest, then you'll see, near the 60 pin connector edge and from left to right: 2 diodes marked "D2", a resistor marked "R5", and finally the unmarked 1N4148 we are talking about.
- has 3 solder holes (terminators) in the following jumpers: J2, J3, J5, J6. The third hole is not inscribed in the white ellipse marked on the PCB that identifies the jumper. Rather, it is often cut through by the white ellipse itself.

STEP 7 - THE 2764 EPROM.

The 2764 Eprom "U26" should be socketed (if not, give up this entire project and send the card to Myarc: it's too difficult to remove a 28 pin soldered IC without doing any damage to the PCB). Remove the Eprom, with the help of a flat screwdriver, by prying alternatively on the two short sides of the IC. Keep the Eprom for any future need.

STEP 8 - IC PIN COUNTING METHOD.

For those who are not familiar with the counting method of the IC pins, I will give this short explanation: put an IC on a table, so that the pins are touching the table surface. Now look down at the IC from above (you should see the component number written on top of the IC): this way of looking at the IC is called "TOP VIEW". You will see a notch (or a dot) on the IC surface; starting from there, and going in a counterclockwise direction, the first pin you will find is pin # 1, next pin is pin # 2, and so on until you get to the last pin (which is again near the notch from where you started the count).
Example:



Later on in this project, when you will be instructed to act on a certain pin # on the "Solder Side" of the PCB, you will have to locate that pin # on the "Component Side" of the PCB, and then you'll flip over

the PCB, keeping track of where that pin sticks out in the "Solder Side".

STEP 9 - CUT TRACES

Now comes the difficult part. With the sharp knife, you should cut some traces on the PCB. It is important that the knife is really sharp, so that the thin copper traces will suffer little from the physical strain.

If you have doubts, this is the right time to give up this project, since the card hasn't been damaged yet.

TRACES TO BE CUT ON THE TOP SIDE ("COMPONENT SIDE")

Keep the 60 pin connector at your right, so that the LED points toward your chest. Then proceed as follows:

- a) TMS4500A ("U23): cut trace leading to PIN 1 (CLK).
- b) TMS4500A ("U23): " " " to PIN 5 (ALE).
- c) TMS4500A ("U23): " " " to PIN 8 (ACR).
- d) 74LS11 ("U22): " " " to PIN 10.
- e) 74LS11 ("U22): cut trace running BETWEEN PIN 5 and PIN 6 .
- f) PAL12L6 ("U20"): cut trace NEXT ON THE RIGHT of PIN 11. This trace will connect to PIN 9 of PAL12L6, by passing underneath the PAL itself.
- g) 74LS259 ("U17"): cut trace leading to PIN 5. If there are 2 traces leading to PIN 5, then cut the one on the right.
- h) 74LS259 ("U17"): cut trace leading to PIN 6. If there are 2 traces leading to PIN 6, then cut the one on the right.
- h) 74LS259 ("U17"): cut trace running BETWEEN PIN 7 and PIN 8 .

TRACES TO BE CUT ON THE BOTTOM SIDE ("SOLDER SIDE")

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- i) PAL 12L6 ("U20"): cut trace leading to PIN 9.
 - j) 74LS11 ("U22"): cut trace connecting PIN 9 and J5 terminator.
 - k) 74LS11 ("U22"): cut trace connecting PIN 8 and J5 terminator.
 - l) 74LS11 ("U22"): cut trace connecting PIN 14 and PIN 9 (ACW) of TMS4500A ("U23").
 - m) 74LS259 ("U17"): cut trace leading to PIN 7.

STEP 10 - INSERT JUMPERS (BOTTOM SIDE).

Now you will have to insert a short jumper in the following jumper holes : "J1", "J2", "J3", "J5" and "J6". It is best to previously heat and suck off the solder so that you can insert easily the jumper.

- A) - "J1", "J2", "J5", "J6"
 - Card Version A: run a jumper so as to connect the two holes enclosed by the white ellipse identifying the Jumper number (J1, J2, J5, J6).
 - Card Version B: run a jumper so as to connect the two holes enclosed by the white ellipse identifying the

Jumper Number (J1, J2, J5, J6).
Leave the third hole
pertaining to the Jumper
Number unconnected.

- B) - "J3" - Card Version A: run a jumper so as to connect the two holes enclosed by the white ellipse identifying "J3".
- Card Version B: run a jumper so that all the three holes of "J3" are electrically connected together.
- C) - PAL12L6 ("U20") : short together PIN 9 and PIN 10.
- D) - 74LS11 ("U22") : run a bridge so as to shorten PIN 10 and PIN 11 together. Be careful, there is a trace running between Pin 10 and Pin 11: don't short this trace as well, but leave it electrically insulated from Pin 10 and Pin 11.

CREATE THE NEXT LONG JUMPERS WITH AN INSULATED WIRE.

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- E) - Card Version B : skip to step F)
- Card Version A :
- 1) - Solder a 1N4148 diode to PIN 2 of TMS4500A ("U23"). The 1N4148 diode has a black band on itself. It is the lead next to this black band that has to be soldered to PIN 2 of the TMS4500A.
Now solder a wire to the other end of the 1N4148 diode.
 - 2) - Now cut the free end of the wire so that it is long enough to reach the solder pad pertaining to PIN 4 (READY) on the 60 Pin Connector Edge to the PEB. You marked this pad at STEP 5 (see above).
 - 3) - Solder the free end of wire to the above solder pad.
- F) - 74LS139 ("U24") : run an insulated jumper so as to connect PIN 1 of the 74LS139 with PIN 8 (ACR) of TMS4500A ("U23").
- G) - TMS4500A ("U23") : run an insulated jumper so as to connect PIN 5 (ALE) of TMS4500A with the solder pad pertaining to PIN 56 (MEMEN) on the 60 Pin Connector Edge to the PEB.
- H) - 74LS00 ("U27") : run another insulated jumper so as to connect the solder pad pertaining to PIN 56 (MEMEN, on the 60 Pin Connector Edge to the PEB) with PIN 12 of the 74LS00 ("U27").
- I) - TMS4500A ("U23") : run an insulated jumper so as to connect the solder pad pertaining to PIN 54 (WE, on the 60 Pin Connector Edge to the PEB) with PIN 9 (ACW) of

- the TMS4500A ("U23").
- J) - 74LS11 ("U22") : run an insulated jumper so as to connect PIN 8 of 74LS11 with PIN 1 (CLCK) of TMS4500A ("U23").
- K) - 74LS11 ("U22") : run an insulated jumper so as to connect PIN 9 of 74LS11 with PIN 11 of the 74LS74 ("U19"). This 74LS74 is the one that is right below the TMS4500A ("U23").
- L) - PAL12L6 ("U20") : run an insulated jumper so as to connect the solder pad pertaining to PIN 43 (A0, on the 60 Pin Connector Edge to the PEB) with PIN 4 of PAL12L6 ("U20").
- M) - 74LS11 ("U22") : run an insulated jumper so as to connect PIN 4 of 74LS11 with the solder pad located between PIN 1 and PIN 2 of PAL12L6 ("U20"). This last solder pad will lead, on the "SOLDER SIDE", to one of the two terminators of "J2" JUMPER.

STEP 11 - Your hard work is finished. Check well all the cuts and all the connections you've made. Once you're sure they are all correct, reinsert the PCB in the clamshells. Close the clamshells and insert the card in the PEB.

If you are a religious person, this is the right time to put into practice what you've learned when you were a boy.

If you are an atheist, well, you know no one will be listening to you up there. So, simply save your time and pass directly to STEP 12.

STEP 12 - Power on the PEB. SYSTEM/SYS should load smoothly.

TEST A) -

Execute the CHKDSK command from DOS environment. Without Expansion Memory the CHKDSK command should give you "557056 bytes of Total Memory".

With Expansion Memory the CHKDSK command should give you "1048576 bytes of Total Memory".

CHKDSK is not capable of identifying addressing problems with the 512 K card. There is another DOS command that will really use the additional memory, the DISKCOMP command, and this is the command you should now use.

TEST B) -

Execute the DISKCOMP command from DOS environment. Without Expansion Memory the DISKCOMP command should eat up about 128 sectors for each pass. With Expansion Memory, instead, the DISKCOMP command should eat up about 896 sectors for each pass.

DISKCOMP Command must not crash. If it does, either you've done something wrong with cutting traces or adding jumpers, or the 512 K card version you have

is different from the ones described in this document.

If the second case is true, you should restore all the cut traces, eliminate all the added jumpers, make sure the card works again in the TI-99/4A environment and send it to Myarc.

If the first case is true, don't panic. Double check again all the work you've done, thinking well about pin counting (it's easy to get confused when flipping over the PCB).

But, if everything works all right, you know for sure you've done a hell of a good work!

THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN ALREADY TESTED

The modifications explained in this file have been already carried out by a third person. After finishing this text file, my friend Massimo Cariboni was able to successfully modify his old 512K Myarc to work with Geneve computer. He carried out the needed modifications by only following this text file.

During the experiment, the original new 512 K cards we recently got from Texaments have been purposely kept away from him. In this way he could not check his work with the new card; the only lead he could follow was this plain text file.

Also, he played no role in writing this text file, so that he could not try to remember what I meant with my writing. It has been a kind of a "single blind" experiment.

Finally, while the new card we had from Texaments were type "B", the old card already in his possession was type "A" (a diode had to be added).

THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS WILL TELL YOU WHY I STARTED THIS PROJECT. I DID NOT PLANNED TO..... BUT I HAD TO. IF YOU DO NOT READ THEM, YOUR CARD WILL WORK WELL ANYWAY...

HOW THE WHOLE STORY BEGAN

In September 1988 my friend Massimo Cariboni and I received one Myarc 512 K Expansion Memory each from Texaments, NY. Steven Lamberti, President of Texaments, said that these two cards were the very first ones to be delivered from Myarc to the Geneve customers. The two cards showed 9 additional wires run across the board (jumpers), 1 diode 1N4148 added, several traces cut and an empty Eprom socket.

We had been previously anticipated by Mr. Lamberti that these card were a simple upgrade of old Myarc 512 K, originally built for the TI-99/4A computer. Therefore, the jumpers and the cuts were no surprise to us.

However, we soon run into troubles.

ADDRESSING PROBLEM

First off, we had a problem with MDOS that would recognize the 512 K added to the system, but would crash on simple tasks such as the DISKCOMP command. A quick inspection with a modified Debugger showed that the new 512 K card would respond at the >80 - >BF memory bank addresses. However, whatever was written in the first >80 - >9F banks would also be read back from the >A0 ->BF banks. It seemed that the card was lacking a decoding of the most significant address, so that it could not distinguish the first 256 K from the second 256 K. A phone call from Mr. Pierre Garoche, 1 Residence Le Terres Rouges, 91120 Palaiseau, France, helped solving the problem. AMC line, Pin 48 in the connector of the Peripheral Expansion Box (PEB), was not connected with the pin 34 (CA7 line) of the TMS 4500A Dram Controller. A simple soldering in the J3 jumper solved the situation (see above at STEP 10-B). .

Now MDOS would operate properly. DISKCOMP and all the other MDOS commands that take advantage of the increased memory size would not fail or crash the system any longer.

HORIZON RAM DISK - CORCOMP DISK CONTROLLER PROBLEM

A second problem showed up as soon as I solved the first. When using the CorComp Floppy Disk Controller (FDC) the Horizon Ram Disk (HRD) would not operate properly. However, the problem disappeared after replacing the CorComp FDC with a Myarc FDC. Why that??? After all, the HRD would work perfectly with the CorComp FDC and without the Myarc 512K Memory Expansion. I could not possibly think of the CorComp FDC as the culprit. Rather, it seemed that a signal, generated inside the Myarc 512K would propagate into the other cards. I wanted to know what was this signal. So, I decided to cut all the traces to the 60 Pin connector, one after the other, until the HRD problem disappeared. After cutting the MEMEN trace the problem vanished. Then I looked carefully at the circuit pertaining to the MEMEN pin and I found out that a 74LS74 output was still linked to MEMEN. Since MEMEN is a signal that has to be generated exclusively by the TMS 9995, the solution was easy: I cut that trace as well. This trace runs from Pin 9 of the 74LS74 (U19) to pin 5 of TMS 4500A (U23). After the cut the problem with the HRD disappeared completely!

ADDRESSING MODE OF TI-99/4A

In the PEB there are 19 address lines. Only 16 of them (A0 through A15) are used by the TI-99/4A, the other 3 lines (AMA, AMB, AMC) are not used (they are brought to a logical high state by a pull-up resistor).
16 lines can directly address only 64 K bytes: this is the addressing limit of the TI-99/4A.

In TI-99/4A the Myarc 512 K card was used almost exclusively as a Ram Disk and/or Printer Spooler. To my knowledge, only the Myarc 128K OS - Advanced Basic Level IV could partially take advantage of the increased memory size.

The Ram Disk/Printer Spooler was operated by the software of a 2764 Eprom placed inside the 512 K card.

The Eprom would bank-in the requested memory segment (bank of >2000 bytes) via the CRU lines (and not via the AMA, AMB, AMC lines). The CRU base address was >1000 and some decoding of the CRU lines were necessary in order to select the proper memory bank.

ADDRESSING MODE IN GENEVE COMPUTER

In Geneve computer, the AMA, AMB and AMC lines are really used as 3 additional address lines. The total 19 lines now can directly address a maximum of 512 K.

Also, in the Geneve computer, the 512 K card is not operated via the CRU lines. Banking is still used, but it occurs directly according to the status of the 19 address lines.

A CLOSING THOUGHT

I apologize in advance for any kind of error that this document may be plagued with, english errors and technical errors. While the first ones should be forgiven (I am an italian who speaks Italian, English has been learned without a formal school), I am sure like hell you are not willing to pardon the technical ones. Ok, be warned that I am not a hardware guru. What I wrote, however simple, was to the best of my knowledge.

A last (and alarming) warning: it has been reported that Myarc itself has having problems with converting to Geneve old 512 K cards. It has to do with chip types, probably speed: some cards have chips that do not perform up to the standard required by the Geneve computer. May be memory chips or TTL chips. As a consequence, I cannot foresee if you will end up with a working 512 K! Got it?.

A last thing: please share your knowledge! If you find a way to improve this text file, please feel free to do so! Simply send this your new version to me, either on disk or on paper, so that I will be able to share it with others once again. It's like an endless chain, you know.....

I will appreciate any of the following: .

- a) Improved english writing. It really important to be clear if you want others to profit from your writing. .
- b) Added or modified technical explanations. .
- c) Modification to the hardware project. In this case you must be really sure that what you've done it is not harmful in any way to the computer. .

Have fun, (it's not a joke!)

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