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Ninety-year-old John Majez, a lifelong resident of Summit Hill, has been selected by the Summit Hill Memorial Day Parade Committee to lead the 2018 parade, Carbon County's largest tribute to America's servicemen and women, which will take place on Monday beginning at 11 a.m. at Ludlow Park.

Majez will ring the old bell of the former Summit Hill High School, from where he graduated in 1945, signaling the step off the line of march that will head west on Ludlow Street, round St. Joseph Catholic Church and proceed east for the full length of White Street.

The parade will follow the traditional memorial services that will begin at 10 a.m. in Ludlow Park, where Summit Hill native Bruce Frassinelli, a Summit Hill native who spent nearly 60 years in the communications and education fields, and who was a Pulitzer Prize nominee, will deliver the keynote address.

His selection as grand marshal, Majez said, "really came as a surprise. It's a great honor. I'm excited about it and looking forward to it."

Parade committee Chairman Thomas Vermillion said, "John was a unanimous decision between the parade committee and the Legion members. He has been an asset to the community for many years and we're happy he accepted the honor."

“Dad is humbled by it (his selection),” said Majez’s daughter, Jacalynne, wife of Mark Lopata of Nesquehoning. “When they (committee members) asked him to be the grand marshal, he asked, ‘what’d they want me for?’” But, she said, “He’s very excited and very proud.”

The grand marshal is a 71-year member of American Legion Post 316, Summit Hill, having joined the post upon his honorable discharge from the U.S. Army in 1947.

A veteran of the post-World War II era, he entered the Army in January 1946, only months after his high school graduation. Earlier, he attended the former St. Stanislaus Parochial School in Summit Hill.

After his basic training at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, Majez made his way to Washington state, after which time he joined the occupational forces in Japan as a member of the 34th Infantry Regiment.

Following service there as a financial typist/clerk, Majez returned to the states at Camp Stoneman, Pittsburg, California, and was discharged as a corporal, receiving the Army Occupation of Japan Medal and the World War Victory Medal.

The lifelong resident of the hilltop community was born Oct. 11, 1927, in Summit Hill, and grew up on Fell Street before relocating to the house he has resided in for nearly his entire life on East Hazard Street.

A son of the late Jakub and Karolina Majez, who immigrated to the U.S. around 1910, he is one of five siblings. Sisters Mary Golas, Sandra Sodroski and Helen Basiago are deceased, as is a brother who died in infancy.

He married the former Elizabeth Jean Choppe of Coaldale on May 15, 1954. She passed away in 2009.

In addition to Jacalynne, they raised two other daughters, Carol, wife of John Ginster of Utica, New York; and Valeria Evans, wife of Jack Rossotti of Alexandria, Virginia. John has three grandchildren, Erin Evans; Cory Lopata, and his fiancée, Krista Paul; and Jake Lopata.

Majez's working career included a stint at a Summit Hill bakery before the war, and jobs as a miner at the former No. 6 Colliery, Lansford, and for Summit Hill Borough.

He later worked for the commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a state liquor store manager, retiring from the Lansford store.

The grand marshal belonged to the former St. Stanislaus Catholic Church, Summit Hill, where he served as secretary of the Holy Name Society, and the former Polish-American Club, Summit Hill. He is a current member of St. Joseph Parish of the Panther Valley, Summit Hill, and the Pennsylvania State Employees Retirement System.

John was an avid golfer, sometimes teeing off three times a week, until he turned 85.