Memorial Planned For Veterans Of Forgotten War

When the guns fell silent over the war-torn Republic of Korea in 1953, thousands of American servicemen and women returned to their homes and normal lives.

Thousands more—the 8,100 missing in action—have not been heard from since. Just last year, the North Koreans formally turned over remains of a handful of U.S. servicemen, but many, many more still are recoverable, experts are convinced.

To honor all those who served during the Korean War, Congress authorized establishment of a national memorial, and President Reagan signed that commitment into law in October 1986. The Korean War Veterans Memorial is to be constructed on the historic Washington Mall near the Lincoln and the Vietnam Veterans memorials.

But, warns the chairman of the memorial advisory board, a lack of funds will jeopardize the effort. Only $7.4 million of the required $12 million has been collected thus far, according to retired Gen. Richard G. Stilwell, former commander-in-chief, U.S. Forces Korea and UN Command in Korea, who was appointed by President Reagan to chair the Korean War Veterans Memorial Advisory Board.

And the entire amount must be collected by the end of October 1991, under a deadline set in the legislation authorizing the memorial. Without that money, construction cannot begin.

The advisory board is asking all Korean veterans—and their families and friends—to join the effort to win what Stilwell calls “the last battle.”

“Five million Americans served during the Korean War,” Stilwell said. “Each and every one has a stake in this fight and your contributions can put us over the top. Send your dollar—and one for the guy who didn’t make it home.”

Contributions should be sent to: Korean War Veterans Memorial Fund, P. O. Box 2372, Washington, D.C. 20013-2372. Or call 1-900-53KOREA to make your $2 contribution. (Charges for the call will be added to your phone bill.)