PHILADELPHIA — The U.S. Mint has begun striking silver dollars commemorating the Korean War, nearly 38 years after the end of the conflict.

Money raised by selling the coins to collectors will help finance the Korean War Memorial in Washington, D.C.

"Clearly the events of recent months can help to remind us of the principles for which our veterans have served," U.S. Treasurer Catalina Vasquez Villalpando said as the first coins were struck last week.

Villalpando, retired Gen. Richard Stilwell and 16 national commanders of veterans' organizations took turns running a giant press in the mint's Gold Room, striking one coin at a time.

Even though the war ended in a military standoff with the armistice of July 27, 1953, Stilwell said, it was a "pivotal event" in post-World War II history.

Congress authorized a maximum of 1 million coins. Proof-grade coins will be minted in Philadelphia. Uncirculated coins, not as highly finished, will be minted in Denver.

The coins are being sold through May 31 at pre-issue prices of $23 for uncirculated and $28 for proof. Seven dollars from each coin will go toward construction of the memorial.

The coin shows a soldier charging up a hill, with Navy ships in the foreground and two fighter planes overhead. The back features a map of Korea, a bust of an American bald eagle and the a symbol from the flag of the Republic of Korea.