

# Chicago Tribune

## Why has Iraq war lasted nearly as long as WWII?

By Kenneth Janda

The United States has been fighting in Iraq since March 19, 2003, when President Bush launched Operation Iraqi Freedom with air strikes against Baghdad. Monday marks the 1,245th day of the Iraqi conflict. By that reckoning, Americans troops will have fought in Iraq for as long as they fought Germany in World War II.

Our war against Germany lasted 1,245 days, from Dec. 11, 1941, (when both nations declared war) until May 8, 1945.

Our war against Japan from Dec. 7, 1941, until Aug. 15, 1945, lasted somewhat longer—1,348 days.

So one cannot yet say that the war in Iraq has been longer than World War II.

By another reckoning, the war in Iraq is already over, having lasted only 44 days. According to President Bush, it ended on May 1, 2003, when, standing on the deck of the aircraft carrier USS Abraham

Lincoln, he said: "Major combat operations in Iraq have ended. In the battle of Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed."

During those 44 days, 140 Americans died in the successful conflict called Operation Iraqi Freedom. In the 1,200 days since, however, more than 2,400 Americans have died in Iraq.

So it does not quite seem right to declare the war in Iraq over on May 1, 2003.

Already, the war in Iraq has gone on as long as the war against Germany (and Italy, which surrendered even earlier), and it seems destined to last even longer than the three years, eight months, and nine days needed to defeat Japan.

Nov. 25, the Saturday after Thanksgiving, will mark the 1,348th day of American involvement in the Iraqi conflict. It is not a date to celebrate.

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