

Irving Swanson

Congresswoman Jeannette Rankin of Montana

Eyewitness account of Montana Congresswoman Jeannette Rankin's lone vote against the U.S. declaration of war against Japan on December 8, 1941.

Interview recorded July 13, 2005

Well, I remember one thing, of course, we had one vote against war. And, it was a lady from Montana—Jeannette Rankin. She voted against war. She was a strict pacifist. She voted against World War I because she felt that way and then she didn't run at that time, one term, and then all of those years up until World War II was declared, she was elected again for one term and she voted against it. And, I remember this vividly because she was down in the front row of the Chamber, which was right in front of me, and she was crying like a baby. And, Everett Dirksen, who she admired, and who was a dear friend of mine, too, came down, put his arm around her, and tried to get her—because he told me that he tried to get her to vote present, but she would not vote present, she voted against the war.