Rankin Inlet, Nunavut

**Population Rank:** Canada . . . 1,185
Territory . . . 9

**Proportions:** 1:2
**Adopted:** Likely in 1991

**DESIGN:** The flag of the Hamlet of Rankin Inlet (Kangiqliniq) is a Canadian pale design of yellow-black-yellow, with a rectangular device in the centre nearly the full height of the flag and half the width of the central black square. The device is a grey rectangle bordered in yellow, with a yellow horizontal band one-eighth of its height at about the lower third. The band divides the rectangle into upper and lower panels. A narrow black line outlines both panels. In the upper panel is a silhouette of a mine head (a tall building with a peaked roof) in white with a window near the top in black. Surmounting it, half the height of the upper panel, is an *inuksuk* (traditional native stone landmark or cairn) in yellow with black details. Both stand on the base of the upper panel. Surmounting the band and extending into the upper and lower panels are crossed tools in white with yellow heads and black details, heads downward—on the left a long-handed miner’s pick, on the right a *kakivak* (Inuit tridented fishing spear). On the band are two inscriptions: on the left *MUNICIPALITY OF RANKIN INLET* in black sans-serif letters on three lines, on the right two lines of Inuktitut syllabic characters with the same meaning, in black.
SYMBOLISM: Rankin Inlet began as the company town for the North Rankin Nickel Mine, which operated from 1957 to 1962 and whose prominent mine head still dominates the skyline. It was never an Inuit campsite—it lacks hunting or fishing opportunities. The yellow bars may indicate gold (or mining in general, as copper and nickel are the primary ores there); the black of the central panel is likely just for contrast. The *inuksuk* figure represents Rankin Inlet’s giant *inuksuk*, constructed in 1991 by artist Joe Natatar (the largest in Canada, although depicted on the flag in compressed form to mirror the slender mine head). The Nunavut territorial flag also bears an *inuksuk*. The pick and spear represent mining and fishing.

HOW SELECTED: The flag was adopted by precedent of usage, both formal and informal. The current flag was created as a form of civic boosterism. Rankin Inlet is “all business”, constantly promoting itself as a development and tourist destination. Likely designed in 1991 after the *inuksuk* which appears on it was constructed, the flag flew at the first sitting of Nunavut’s Legislative Assembly on 1 April 1999.

DESIGNER: Unknown.

MORE ABOUT THE FLAG: Rankin Inlet is named for Lt. John Rankin, of the sloop *Furnace*, on British explorer Christopher Middleton’s 1741 voyage seeking the Northwest Passage. The name “Rankin Inlet” was adopted for the settlement 2 October 1958; the Hamlet of Rankin Inlet incorporated in January 1975.

FORMER FLAG: The first Rankin Inlet flag is a Canadian pale design of green-white-green, with an *inua* symbol of a double snow goose (*Anser caerulescens*) in the centre, in blue. The traditional native *inua*, or human-like spirit encased within an animal totem, suggests that all creatures have a spirit similar and equal to the human one. (The snow goose comes in a “blue” version, as well as pure white, depending upon the season, but it is the same creature.) It was designed by artist Nicholas Irkootee. He had designed the snow goose *inua* used around Rankin Inlet before 1985 on T-shirts and town signage. Rob Butler, graphic artist at Inkit Graphics in Yellowknife, NWT, used Irkootee’s design, unchanged, on the 1985 flag.
All such NWT/Nunavut civic flags were designed in 1985 for the Northwest Territories Exhibition Hall at Vancouver’s Expo ’86, at the initiative of heraldry enthusiast Michael Moore, then a deputy minister at the NWT Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA). The side-bar colours of these Canadian pale designs vary from dark blue, to green, to brown, and to bright red.