

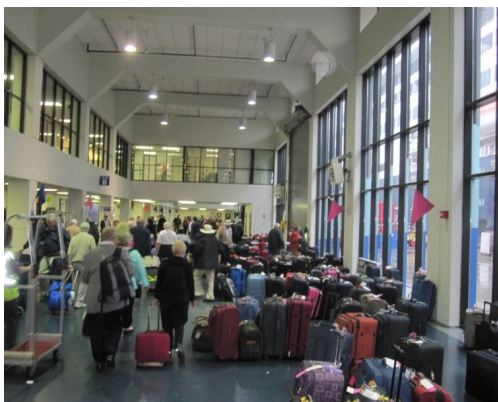
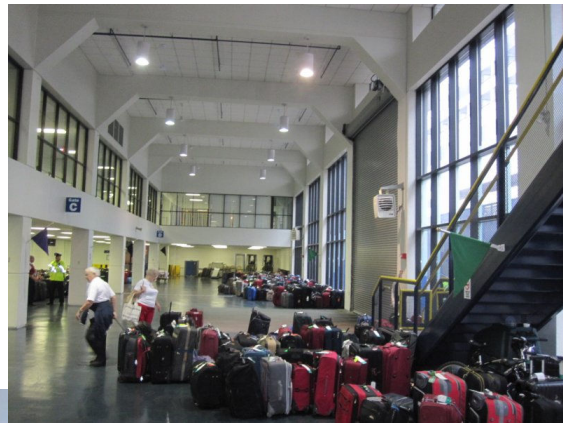
## Day 36 – August 29 Boston – Cruise Over (sniff-sniff) – Going Home

The Maasdam pulled into Boston Harbor about 6am with a light rain drizzling down. The dreary outside conditions reflected our mood as the cruise was now over and we faced the task of traveling today. The somber mood was reinforced by the wall to wall TV coverage of Ted Kennedy's funeral that was taking place in Boston this morning.

There is always an anxious time as the outgoing passengers mill about getting clearance from the immigration and customs agents on board and then just waiting. The waiting is required to give the crew time to transfer pallet loads of our luggage to the cruise terminal and distribute the bags on the floor so we can find them after we leave the ship. Trying to get everyone's luggage down the gangway along with all the passengers just wouldn't work.

One pleasant surprise this morning was that the US Customs Agent simply accepted our standard Customs Declaration Form and said we were cleared to go ashore. In past years we have had to collect all of our luggage on shore and lug it past the customs agents so they, in principle, could inspect it for contraband if they wanted to. They hardly ever do a physical check of the contents of cruise passenger luggage so they have apparently changed that policy to a much more practical and convenient procedure.

Finally about 9am we were allowed to check out of the Maasdam as they scanned our Cruise Card for the last time. We made our way into the cruise terminal where the mass of everyone's luggage was waiting for us. These following pictures show what we saw and these are the scenes that confront most passengers at the end of their cruise.



The bags were arranged by the color coded tags so finding our luggage wasn't nearly as hard as we had anticipated. We soon had located our bags and a friendly porter loaded our stuff onto his cart and got us into a taxi.

The ride to Logan Airport was a short one of about 10 minutes and soon we were processed through the US Airways system and the dreaded Security inspection. Our day was looking up significantly when we found that we had gone through the worst part of the trip home in less than 1 hour after leaving the ship.

Our flights to Philadelphia and then on the Knoxville, Tennessee went smoothly. Barbara got fascinated with the cloud pattern at one point and took the picture below to show how our spirits were starting to recover from the ending of the cruise.



When we reached Knoxville our recovery was completed at the airport by the joyous greetings from Steve, Becky and Emily. We collected ourselves and posed for this homecoming picture.

We will be leaving on future travel and cruises but the joy of coming home to family always trumps the fun of taking off on a new adventure.



This blog entry brings our story about the Voyage of the Vikings cruise to an end. We will have it to cherish and hope that other people may have enjoyed parts of it.

We have plans to blog a future cruise at the website of <http://2009aunzcruise.thestansfields.com/> . Interested people are invited to check it out.

Cheers,

Orlin and Barbara