

## **JOINT MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **DIVISION OF FORENSIC SCIENCE TAKES POSSESSION OF UNCLAIMED CREMAINS LOCATED IN FORMER DOVER FUNERAL HOME**

The discovery of several small containers of cremains at a former Dover funeral home prompted the Delaware Department of Safety and Homeland Security Division of Forensic Science (DFS) and the Dover Police Department to conduct an exploratory excavation on the property on Wednesday.

Last week, DFS responded to a request to check the former Minus Funeral Home after 38 small containers of cremains were discovered inside the building located at 222 North Queen Street. Of the 38 containers, 33 were clearly marked and identified. These marked containers of cremains span a period from approximately 1970 through the 1990s. Nine of these were identified as victims of the 1978 Jonestown Massacre.

DFS took possession of all cremains that were located on the site. Staff will continue working to identify the remaining cremains and make notifications to family members or arrangements for a final disposition.

While DFS checked the facility, Dover police officers who accompanied them identified other areas of interest on the property. These were areas of loosely compacted soil. The exploratory excavation was conducted to determine if additional unclaimed cremains were on the property so that they could be identified and returned to family. During the excavation, DFS staff discovered an arrowhead, two animal bones, oyster shells and charcoals.

Several bronze gravesite markers for deceased veterans who served in World War I through the Vietnam War were also located in the facility during the initial DFS check. These markers will be presented to family members if they can be located or returned to the Veterans Administration.

The New Castle County Police Department also assisted DFS and Dover PD with the excavation.

**END**