FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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First Command Reports: Career military families pinching pennies for the holidays  
First Command Financial Behaviors Index® reveals one out of three service members plan to spend less than $500 on gifts  

FORT WORTH, Texas – Gift shopping is a major focus of frugality for career service member families again this holiday season.

First Command's annual holiday spending survey reveals that 92 percent of middle-class military families (commissioned officers and senior NCOs in pay grades E-5 and above with household incomes of at least $50,000) plan to cut back this year, statistically unchanged from the past five years. Roughly two out of five (39 percent) expect to spend less on gifts this year, making it their No. 1 belt-tightening plan for the holidays.

Military shoppers expect to spend considerably less on gifts than last year. On average they anticipate spending $1,148, down 30 percent from the $1,625 they estimate having spent last year. Roughly one in three families (37 percent) say they expect to spend less than $500 on gifts.

Military families also expect to cut their gift giving expenses by:

- Giving fewer gifts per person (30 percent)
- Setting a maximum amount for gifts (28 percent)
- Buying gifts at discount stores (25 percent)
- Giving gifts to fewer people (24 percent)
- Making gifts (13 percent)

Black Friday shopping continues to be a central gift-buying strategy for career military families. Thirty six percent of survey respondents said they planned to do most or all of their holiday shopping on the day after Thanksgiving.

Other ways military families are cutting back for the holidays include spending less on travel (25 percent), decorations (23 percent) and food (13 percent).

“The 2016 holiday shopping season marks the ninth consecutive year that the Index has pointed to leaner spending in military families,” said Scott Spiker, CEO of First Command Financial Services, Inc. “Notably, these conservative spending behaviors are helping America’s career service members feel more confident about their finances. Their willingness to carry belt-tightening ways through the holiday season underscores a broader commitment to maintain year-around control over household finances in the ongoing pursuit of long-term financial security.”

About the First Command Financial Behaviors Index®
aged 25 to 70 with annual household incomes of at least $50,000. Results are reported quarterly. The margin of error is +/- 4.3 percent with a 95 percent level of confidence. http://www.firstcommand.com/fbi/

About Sentient Decision Science, Inc.
Sentient Decision Science was commissioned by First Command to compile the Financial Behaviors Index®. SDS is a behavioral science and consumer psychology consulting firm with special vertical expertise within the financial services industry. SDS specializes in advanced research methods and statistical analysis of behavioral and attitudinal data.

About First Command
First Command Financial Services and its subsidiaries, including First Command Advisory Services, First Command Bank and First Command Financial Planning, assist American families in their efforts to build wealth, reduce debt and pursue their lifetime financial goals and dreams—focusing on consumer behavior as the first and most powerful determinant of results. Through knowledgeable advice and coaching of the financial behaviors conducive to success, First Command Financial Advisors have built trustworthy, lasting relationships with hundreds of thousands of client families since 1958.

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