US FLAG RETIREMENT CEREMONY

One person reads the following as guard performs instructions in parenthesis. A wire rack is placed above fire so that parts of flag will not touch ground when placed over fire.

Color guard consists of seven people: one leader and six guards. The color guard led by the seventh person advances with the fully out-stretched flag held at arm's length over their heads. When the color guard comes to a halt in front of the fireplace, the flag is lowered to shoulder height.

#1 G.S. Our Nation's Flag represents a living country. It is considered a living thing. Our duty, then, is to pay proper respect to this retiring flag by burning it in a dignified manner.

#2 G.S. (On the word "death" flag is lowered to lower arm length.)
In death, as in life, the worn out flag should not touch the ground but should be burned on a rack. As the flag begins to burn, the assembled are called to attention, and offer the honor of a parting salute to the flag as it burns.

#3 G.S. The actual disposal of the flag begins with the separation of the blue field from the rest of the flag. (Guard on right, holding blue field, starts to cut out blue field.) The blue field represents justice like the eternal blue of the star filled heavens. Each star represents a state, and without this blue section it is impossible to have a flag. As we cut this field, all honors are given our flag.
(Place blue field, folded in a triangle, over left arm of girl standing at fireplace.)

#4 G.S. (As reading continues, cut white and red stripes and place over right arm.) The white of the flag is for purity, cleanliness, of purpose - of word or deed - its red is the life blood of brave men and women ready to die, or to worthily live for their country.
(Continue cutting 2 strips at a time until all are done.)

#5 G.S. (Cutter advances, takes stripes and lays them over wire.) As the stripes burn, shall we all join in and sing one verse of "America the Beautiful."

(Pause until stripes are burned.)

#6 G.S. As the stars burn, shall we all join in and sing "My Country 'Tis of Thee." (Cutter advances, takes blue field and lays it over wire. Pause until it is burned.)

#7 G.S. Now the flag has burned down to ashes. These ashes will be scattered so that the four winds can carry them over the land for which the American flag stands.

#8 G.S. We will all unite in singing "Star Spangled Banner."

#9 G.S. Color Guard retire. (Guard steps one step away from center. Leader passes between two rows of guards followed by cutter and partner, etc., last two simply turning and following. Later, when ashes are cold, take some, form circle, place pinch of ashes on open hand of four girls, one facing North, one facing South, one facing East, one facing West. On signal, have them blow ashes off their hand in each of four directions.)