

Eileen Boyd's Two Sons Enlist

THOUSANDS of New Zealand radio listeners will remember the lovely voice of Eileen Boyd, contralto, who toured the National Stations about two years ago, and who was heard in a recital programme from 2YC last Tuesday. No one knew, however, that there is tragedy in her life, brought about by war. Her first husband, the late Captain Hugh Roberts, of the Royal Navy, she recently told an Australian interviewer, was killed in action in the Great War, while her second husband, Gordon Lane, is still in the Randwick Military Hospital as a result of injuries in the same great catastrophe. And now her two sons have enlisted.

"I am proud—very proud of my boys," she said. "Considering that their fathers both fought for their country, it's no wonder that Albert and John have joined up. Albert, the older, is just twenty-four and quiet, while John, who is eighteen, is the humorist of our little family. We have christened ourselves 'The Three Musketeers!'"

Eileen Boyd, whose personality has no difficulty in making its way through the microphone or over the footlights of the concert stage, gave the information that Albert was a sergeant. For three years he had been in the militia and was very keen on soldiering. "He was called up the day after war was declared, and I've seen very little of him since. John, who's a sapper, enlisted after the outbreak of hostilities. When both the boys are home together, we make it a real party, and though I am a shockingly bad cook, I do my best to prepare their favourite dishes."

"When I told the boys," she added with a smile, "that I was thinking of taking cooking lessons so that I could cook for the soldiers, John replied in his dry way: 'Never mind about learning to cook for the boys in camp, Mum—you learn to cook for us when we come home.' Can you beat that?"

"And what about their jobs?"

"Their positions are being kept open for them. But I forgot to tell you about John. He didn't let on to me he had joined up until one day I noticed two rifles in their room. I thought: 'This is funny. Don't tell me Albert has to carry a gun in both arms?' So I asked for an explanation immediately."

Eileen Boyd has given much of her time to arranging concerts and singing for soldiers in various training camps—she is programme director for the Arts Club Military Entertainers—and is very grateful to the artists who are giving their services free. "Anyway," she says, "I'm still waiting for the Government to form a Ladies' Regiment. Then I'll join up too. But not in the capacity of a cook. John, I'm afraid, was right. If I started cooking for the boys they'd all be dismissed as medically unfit, and then where would Australia be?"

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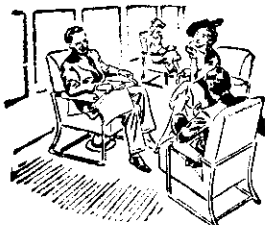
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