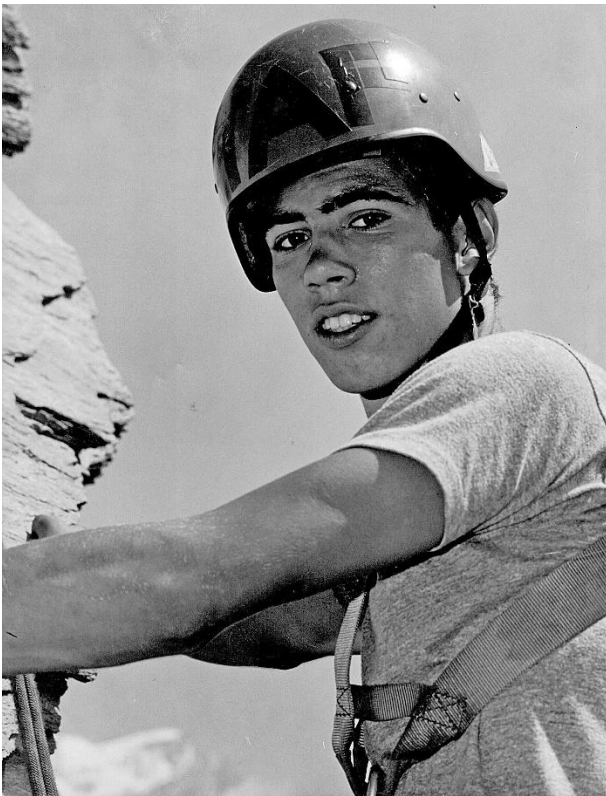


Army Public Information
Headquarters
United Kingdom Land Forces
Wilton
Salisbury
Wiltshire

UKLF 82/96/2-5

Salisbury Military Ext 2345
Civil (0722) 6222)

GRAVESEND ARMY APPRENTICE TRAINS IN THE ALPS



Events during recent months in the South Atlantic will soon be forgotten by most of us but the training of British soldiers which made the outcome possible will continue as hard and relentlessly as ever. Training to join the well motivated, equipped and trained to operate anywhere force is Apprentice Technician Kevin Taplin (17) of the Royal Engineers.

Kevin's parents live at Cruden Road, Gravesend. Kevin joined the Army in 1981 and recently qualified as a plumber at the Army Apprentices College at Chepstow. Off duty, Kevin, who was educated at Thames View Secondary School, is keen on soccer, rugby or cricket.

Kevin is one of fifty British servicemen on an alpine combat and survival course in Northern Italy, amid the snowfields and glaciers on Monte Bianco, Europe's highest mountain. Their hosts and instructors are the world famous Italian Alpini Regiment, a crack unit which produces the finest mountain troops and plays an important part in the protection of NATO's southern flank.

At 15,000 feet in bitterly cold winds they have to train to fight not only an enemy but frostbite, snow blindness and altitude sickness. Asked what were the main problems of altitude, he said, "You have to control your climbing rate especially over twelve thousand feet. Body heat should stay fairly constant. Unnecessary exertion and sweating causes problems in sub-zero temperatures",

Our picture shows Kevin on a practice climb. On successfully completing the four week course he joins a select band of men able to operate on rock, snow and ice at high altitude. **END**