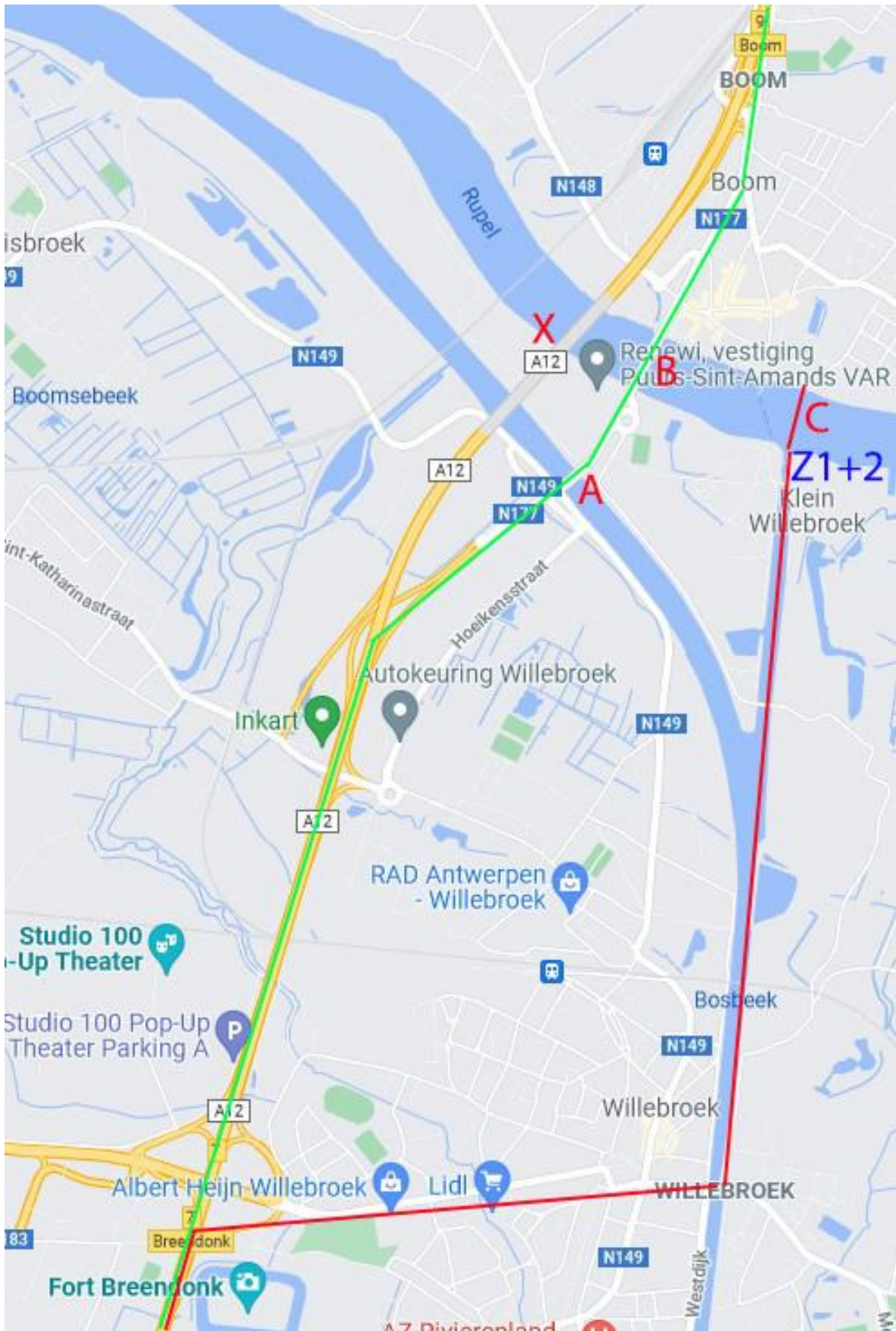


the liberation of Boom, the Rupel region, Hemiksem, Hoboken and Antwerp



Lieutenant Colonel DAVID ARTHUR HENRY SILVERTOP commanding Officer of the 3rd Royal Tank Regiment, 11th Armoured Division en route from Brussels to Antwerp via the **A12** (See green line)

They were stopped by Robert Vekemans, a former Lieutenant of the Belgian engineer troops, (he was an engineer specialized in bridge construction). He knew that both bridges (“**A**” over the canal Rupel - Brussels and “**B**” over the Rupel) were equipped with explosives. The German troops on the north side of bridge “**B**” were waiting to blow up both bridges at the slightest sign of danger.

He waited for the British units in **Breendonk** on the A12 and after informing the British officers of the danger, he was given some tanks to cross the canal via the village of Willebroek and advance next to the canal to the village of Klein Willebroek to cross the small toll bridge waiter (**Red line and “C” toll bridge**)

Once over the toll bridge, they attacked the German troops guarding bridge “**B**” on the north side from the flank. Surprised by this attack, both A12 bridges fell intact into British hands, the explosives were removed and the bulk of the British unit was able to cross both bridges safely.

After crossing both bridges, the road to Antwerp was open. At the same time, small units were sent to both sides of the A12 to liberate the villages between Boom and Antwerp and to eliminate or capture German units still in the area.

Likewise in my village, Hemiksem, there were minor skirmishes between British and German soldiers...

The letter "X" on the map is the Rupeltunnel, built many years after the war. The blue letters "Z1+2" are a remnant of the toll bridge and a British tank that is placed there as a reminder.

