

A close-up photograph of Michael Phelps smiling and holding a gold medal. The medal is inscribed with "XXX Olympiad London 2012" and features the Olympic rings and a torch. A purple ribbon is attached to the medal.

## Today in History

*July 31, 2012*

▲ **U.S. swimmer Michael Phelps became the most prolific ever Olympic medallist. He retired after London 2012 with a total of 22 medals, 18 of them gold**

**1965:** The last cigarette commercial appeared on British television

**1994:** Dutch driver Jos Verstappen escaped miraculously when his car caught fire at the German Grand Prix

**2007:** The lost city of Rhakoti, some 700 years older than Alexandria, was found by underwater archaeologists

**2009:** Russian gas giant Gazprom began constructing a 1,118-mile pipeline linking offshore fields in the Pacific with the port of Vladivostok