



## Today in History

*August 20, 1961*

▲ **East Germany began to erect a wall in Berlin and elsewhere along the border with the West. It was a potent symbol of the Cold War until it was torn down in 1989**

**636:** Khalid ibn al-Walid won control of Syria and Palestine from the Byzantine Empire at the Battle of Yarmouk

**1741:** Danish explorer Vitus Bering, an officer in the Russian Navy, discovered Alaska

**1991:** The Baltic republic of Estonia, annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940, declared full independence

**2019:** Smoke from wildfires in the Amazon rainforest darkened skies over major cities across Brazil