

Death," morale never cracked. Admiral Weichold wrote after the war, "the caution shown in high places was not caused by lack of courage among the men."<sup>9</sup> Admiral de Belot endorsed this assessment as early as 1951 and noted that "history . . . will correct the impression of wartime propaganda which attributed the defeats of the Italian Navy to a general lack of fighting spirit."<sup>10</sup> When Italy signed an armistice in September 1943, the navy was the only service that remained intact and effective. The lower decks never revolted or refused to serve as did Austro-Hungarian, German, and Russian sailors during the First World War, British sailors between the wars, and elements of the French navy after the 1940 armistice.

*Training of Officers: Naval Academies.* Naval officers were long-term professionals. The Accademia Navale di Livorno was established in 1881. Its curriculum stressed mathematics and ballistics, and every graduate was expected to be a sailor first and foremost. The instructional day commenced at 0530 and continued until 2130. Students were allowed just one opportunity to make up a failed exam. In 1940 its enrollment was 697 students (up from 222 in 1934), and it graduated about 150 officers a year who entered service as midshipmen.

**PHOTO 4.2.** Italian officer candidates learning the use of a sextant, Leghorn naval academy, 1941. The building to their right is the Marineletto center where the Italian navy tested its first radar set in October 1939. (Enrico Cernuschi collection)

