Chapter 3, “Open City”, pp. 28

“...The United States of America did not enter the war, on the side of the Allied
Powers, until the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in Hawaii on December 7,
1941. Because the Philippines was then a Commonwealth of the United States,
it meant that we Filipinos were also in the war. I was seven years old and sitting
at my school desk in second grade that day, when the teacher said that we were
to line up outside, that our parents were coming to get us, and that a war had
started.

“The next day, December 8, the Japanese bombed Manila for the first time. My
parents put us all under my father’s big desk, covered up with all our mattresses.
The house shook with each blast, and window panes shattered and crashed. It
was much worse than all the earthquakes I had experienced up to then, and
ever afterwards. I was startled by the loud noises but I don’t remember being
very frightened, perhaps because I didn’t really know what it was all about
except that we were in a war. My parents seemed very calm and so I was, too.
After the first one, the air raids came like waves, with a quiet time in between
that sometimes lasted for an hour or several hours. We never could tell how
long before another air raid would begin, until we heard the faint rumble of the
airplane engines that got louder and louder.

“My father and some other men from the neighborhood dug a very deep and
wide trench in the ground in between several houses. Next they installed a
corrugated iron roof covered with deep earth over the trench. They brought
wooden benches into the trench and thereafter, during air-raids, we would run
into that shelter carrying water. We fil