

12

Description

This invention relates generally to fluid seals, and more particularly to packings for providing a high pressure fluid seal between a valve stem and bonnet or other element surrounding the stem.

Background

Although valve stem packings constructed of elastomeric materials are known to be satisfactory for a variety of conditions, such packings do not provide the desired sealing function when subjected to high pressure gas environments, their failure being due to the phenomenon known as "explosive decompression". Replacing elastomeric materials with non-elastomers eliminates the "explosive decompression" problem, but non-elastomers creep when subjected to pressure and then do not return to their original condition when the pressure is removed, i.e., they have no memory. Due to the creep problem and the difference in the coefficient of thermal expansion of non-elastomers and the metallic packing gland and stem of a valve conventional non-elastomeric stem packings leak after subjection to a pressure and temperature cycle.

In attempts to overcome the foregoing problems non-elastomeric lip seals have been provided with spring energizers to bias the sealing lips against the opposing metallic surface. Such a design is effective where the metallic surface is very smooth, but if the sealing lip is scratched or otherwise slightly damaged it will leak. Spring energized seals cannot be stacked in series to increase reliability unless a cartridge or other carrier is provided to contain them, but the carrier constitutes an undesirable additional part that adds to the cost, creates another potential leak path in the system, and necessitates enlargement of the packing gland and packing chamber.

According to one prior art, namely US-A-3 554 563, there is disclosed an annular hydraulic seal assembly of the type to be utilized between two relatively movable members such as a rod and a housing surrounding the rod. In this prior art a plurality of V-shaped intermediate seals, stacked one on top of the other, surround said shaft. The lowermost V-shaped seal, assuming the rod to be vertical, rests on an elastomeric loading seal of Y-shaped cross-sectional configuration. This loading seal rests on a base seal which is also Y-shaped and has a groove between the two upwardly extending arms of the Y-shape, into which groove the stem of the Y-shaped loading seal extends. The base seal rests on a shoulder of the housing. On the uppermost V-shaped seal rests a terminal ring of solid cross-sectional shape to fit within the V-shape of said uppermost V-shaped seal. This terminal ring has a flat upper face against which another part of the housing acts to press the terminal ring and the aforesaid seals, all of which surround the shaft, together to expand said seals radially in a manner causing a sealing effect between the housing and said shaft. The accompanying Claim 1 has been

divided into its two-part form on the basis of this prior art.

DE-U-1 970 804 discloses a packing gland arrangement for joining two pipe sections together. It includes a plurality of sealing rings that surround one pipe end with said sealing rings nesting one within the other. The description states that these sealing rings are V-shaped but in the accompanying drawing they can be identified as being Y-shaped. Some of these rings are of asbestos and the others are of polytetrafluoroethylene and the one type is interspersed with the other. They are compressed to form a seal between said pipe end and a sleeve part surrounding said pipe.

Summary of the invention

The foregoing and other problems are solved by the present invention which is set out in the accompanying Claim 1. As already stated, the pre-characterizing part of Claim 1 contains those features of the claim that are already known from US-A-3 554 563. The characterizing part of the claim sets forth the features of Claim 1 that are not known from said prior art.

The valve stem packing assembly of the present invention establishes an essentially void-free dynamic packing between the stem and the chamber wall that is capable of withstanding many hundreds of gate valve stroke cycles (valve open to closed to open constituting one cycle) at unusually high pressures of fifteen thousand pounds per square inch and above, and unusually high temperatures of two-hundred and fifty degrees Fahrenheit and above. Furthermore, a stem packing assembly according to the present invention is extrusion-free, insensitive to fluctuations in pressure and/or temperature, and exceedingly resistant to chemical attack.

Brief description of the drawings

Figure 1 is a diagrammatic view, partially in elevation and partially in vertical section, of a gate valve fitted with a stem packing assembly according to the present invention.

Figure 2 is an enlarged view, the right half in elevation and the left half in vertical section, of a valve stem packing assembly according to the present invention, ready for installation in a valve such as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 3 is an enlarged fragmentary view of the valve of Figure 1, showing the stem packing assembly of Figure 2 in position surrounding the valve stem.

Figure 4 is a view like Figure 3 but showing the packing assembly when exposed to high internal valve pressure.

Description of the preferred embodiment

In accordance with the present invention, and as illustrated in Figure 1 of the drawings, a valve stem packing assembly 10 can be employed in a rising stem gate valve 12 to provide a high pressure, high temperature dynamic seal between the valve's stem 14 and bonnet 16. In the

valve 12 the packing assembly 10 is located in, and confined to, a packing chamber 18 in the bonnet 16, and a packing gland nut 20 retains the packing assembly 10 in functional position in the chamber 18. The valve 12 further includes a body 22 to which the bonnet 16 is removably secured by a threaded retainer sleeve 24, and a gate element 26 connected to the stem 14 for translatory longitudinal movement between its illustrated upper or "valve open" position and its lower or "valve closed" position (not shown) wherein it blocks the flow, represented by arrow 28, through the valve. In the conventional manner the gate 26 is suitably connected to the stem 14 so that it is raised and lowered with the stem when a hand-wheel 30, or other suitable means of operating the valve, is actuated.

As seen more clearly in Figure 2—4, the packing assembly 10 comprises a plurality of V-ring seal elements 32 in stacked array and oriented in an inverted attitude toward the valve gate 26, a like plurality of somewhat Y-shaped special backup/energizing rings 34 inverted and interspersed between and beneath the V-ring seal elements 32, a spring-energized lip seal ring 36 beneath the lowermost backup/energizing ring 34a, a lower adapter ring 38 having cross-sectional configuration generally resembling an inverted tea, and an upper adapter ring 40 with an inverted vee-shaped lower wall 40a that provides a backup function to the adjacent V-ring 32, a retaining function, in cooperation with the packing gland nut 20 and a spacer ring 42 (Figures 3 and 4), that prevents the packing assembly 10 from moving out of proper position in the chamber 19 during translation of the valve gate 26 from closed to open position, and also acts as a guide bearing for the valve item 14.

The preferred composition from which the V-ring seal elements 32 and the lip seal ring 36 are made is polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) filled with glass (fifteen percent), and molybdenum disulfide (five percent), and the special back-up/energizing rings 34 preferably are composed of PTFE filled with carbon graphite (twenty-five percent). In order to preserve the functional integrity of the lip seal ring's U-shaped energizing spring 44, that spring preferably is constructed from a NACE (National Association of Corrosion Engineers)-approved metal such as, for example, ELGILOY which is a metallic alloy product of the Welby Clock Division of Elgin National Industries. With respect to the upper and lower adapter rings 40, 38, their preferred composition is glass-filled PEEK (polyetheretherketone) containing forty percent glass and two and one-half to five percent PPS (polyphenylenesulfide).

As shown in Figure 2, the surfaces 32b of the V-ring seal elements 32 define an angle, with respect to the vertical, of greater magnitude than that defined by the opposed surfaces 34b of the back-up/energizing rings 34, thereby establishing relatively small annular spaces or voids 50 between the elements 32 and rings 34 before the assembly 10 is installed in the packing chamber

18. Similarly, prior to installation the opposed surfaces 32c, 34c of the elements 32 and rings 34, respectively, define different angles with respect to the vertical, thereby also defining small annular spaces or voids 52 therebetween. Also as illustrated in Figure 2, central annular spaces or voids 54 exist between the V-ring seal elements 32 and the adjacent back-up/energizing rings 34, between the uppermost seal element 32 and the adapter ring 40, and between the lowermost back-up/energizing ring 34 and the lip seal ring 36, before installation of the assembly 10 in the valve 12.

As illustrated in Figure 3, when the stem packing assembly 10 is installed in a properly sized packing chamber 18 surrounding a properly sized valve stem 14 the annular spaces or voids 50 and 52 disappear as a result of radial compression of the V-ring seal elements 32 and the back-up/energizing rings 34, whereas the annular spaces or voids 54 remains. When installed as shown in Figure 3, the seal elements 32, back-up/energizing rings 34 and the adjacent surfaces of the valve bonnet 16 and the valve stem 14 define annular spaces or voids 56 of generally triangular shape in cross-section. Furthermore, when installed in the valve the lip seal ring 36 is radially compressed so that the edges 44a of the downwardly-facing energizing spring 44 deflect in the direction of the central upstanding "leg" 38a of the lower adapter ring 38.

When the packing assembly 10 is exposed to elevated internal valve pressure as shown in Figure 4, the lips 36a of the lip seal 36 expand radially to effect an initial pressure seal with the stem 14 and the packing chamber 18, thereby facilitating the lip seal to function as a piston that transmits an axial force to the back-up/energizing rings 34 and the V-ring seal elements 32, which force causes these rings and seal elements to migrate toward the back-up ring 40. This migration causes deflection or deformation of the V-ring seal elements 32 which tend to fill the annular spaces 54, 56 and thus produce a voidless relationship between the seal elements, the back-up/energizing rings 34, the lip seal ring 36, the upper adapter ring 40, the valve stem 14 and the wall of the packing chamber 18. As pressure increases the axial force transmitted to the V-ring sealing elements increases, thereby resulting in an increase in the sealing force exerted by the V-ring sealing elements against the valve stem and packing chamber wall, and providing a fluid-tight, dynamic seal that will withstand many hundreds of translatory cycles of the stem, at temperatures of at least 250 degrees F. and pressures of at least 15,000 psi.

Claims

1. A valve stem packing assembly in the form of a stacked array, comprising
 - a) a plurality of seal ring elements (32) each having a generally V-shaped cross-sectional configuration; characterized by:

valve 12 the packing assembly 10 is located in, and confined to, a packing chamber 18 in the bonnet 16, and a packing gland nut 20 retains the packing assembly 10 in functional position in the chamber 18. The valve 12 further includes a body 22 to which the bonnet 16 is removably secured by a threaded retainer sleeve 24, and a gate element 26 connected to the stem 14 for translatable longitudinal movement between its illustrated upper or "valve open" position and its lower or "valve closed" position (not shown) wherein it blocks the flow, represented by arrow 28, through the valve. In the conventional manner the gate 26 is suitably connected to the stem 14 so that it is raised and lowered with the stem when a hand-wheel 30, or other suitable means of operating the valve, is actuated.

As seen more clearly in Figure 2—4, the packing assembly 10 comprises a plurality of V-ring seal elements 32 in stacked array and oriented in an inverted attitude toward the valve gate 26, a like plurality of somewhat Y-shaped special backup/energizing rings 34 inverted and interspersed between and beneath the V-ring seal elements 32, a spring-energized lip seal ring 36 beneath the lowermost backup/energizing ring 34a, a lower adapter ring 38 having cross-sectional configuration generally resembling an inverted tee, and an upper adapter ring 40 with an inverted vee-shaped lower wall 40a that provides a backup function to the adjacent V-ring 32, a retaining function, in cooperation with the packing gland nut 20 and a spacer ring 42 (Figures 3 and 4), that prevents the packing assembly 10 from moving out of proper position in the chamber 19 during translation of the valve gate 26 from closed to open position, and also acts as a guide bearing for the valve item 14.

The preferred composition from which the V-ring seal elements 32 and the lip seal ring 36 are made is polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) filled with glass (fifteen percent), and molybdenum disulfide (five percent), and the special back-up/energizing rings 34 preferably are composed of PTFE filled with carbon graphite (twenty-five percent). In order to preserve the functional integrity of the lip seal ring's U-shaped energizing spring 44, that spring preferably is constructed from a NACE (National Association of Corrosion Engineers)-approved metal such as, for example, ELGILOY which is a metallic alloy product of the Welby Clock Division of Elgin National Industries. With respect to the upper and lower adapter rings 40, 38, their preferred composition is glass-filled PEEK (polyetheretherketone) containing forty percent glass and two and one-half to five percent PPS (polyphenylenesulfide).

As shown in Figure 2, the surfaces 32b of the V-ring seal elements 32 define an angle, with respect to the vertical, of greater magnitude than that defined by the opposed surfaces 34b of the back-up/energizing rings 34, thereby establishing relatively small annular spaces or voids 50 between the elements 32 and rings 34 before the assembly 10 is installed in the packing chamber

18. Similarly, prior to installation the opposed surfaces 32c, 34c of the elements 32 and rings 34, respectively, define different angles with respect to the vertical, thereby also defining small annular spaces or voids 52 therebetween. Also as illustrated in Figure 2, central annular spaces or voids 54 exist between the V-ring seal elements 32 and the adjacent back-up/energizing rings 34, between the uppermost seal element 32 and the adapter ring 40, and between the lowermost back-up/energizing ring 34 and the lip seal ring 36, before installation of the assembly 10 in the valve 12.

As illustrated in Figure 3, when the stem packing assembly 10 is installed in a properly sized packing chamber 18 surrounding a properly sized valve stem 14 the annular spaces or voids 50 and 52 disappear as a result of radial compression of the V-ring seal elements 32 and the back-up/energizing rings 34, whereas the annular spaces or voids 54 remains. When installed as shown in Figure 3, the seal elements 32, back-up/energizing rings 34 and the adjacent surfaces of the valve bonnet 16 and the valve stem 14 define annular spaces or voids 56 of generally triangular shape in cross-section. Furthermore, when installed in the valve the lip seal ring 36 is radially compressed so that the edges 44a of the downwardly-facing energizing spring 44 deflect in the direction of the central upstanding "leg" 38a of the lower adapter ring 38.

When the packing assembly 10 is exposed to elevated internal valve pressure as shown in Figure 4, the lips 36a of the lip seal 36 expand radially to effect an initial pressure seal with the stem 14 and the packing chamber 18, thereby facilitating the lip seal to function as a piston that transmits an axial force to the back-up/energizing rings 34 and the V-ring seal elements 32, which force causes these rings and seal elements to migrate toward the back-up ring 40. This migration causes deflection or deformation of the V-ring seal elements 32 which tend to fill the annular spaces 54, 56 and thus produce a voidless relationship between the seal elements, the back-up/energizing rings 34, the lip seal ring 36, the upper adapter ring 40, the valve stem 14 and the wall of the packing chamber 18. As pressure increases the axial force transmitted to the V-ring sealing elements increases, thereby resulting in an increase in the sealing force exerted by the V-ring sealing elements against the valve stem and packing chamber wall, and providing a fluid-tight, dynamic seal that will withstand many hundreds of translatable cycles of the stem, at temperatures of at least 250 degrees F. and pressures of at least 15,000 psi.

Claims

1. A valve stem packing assembly in the form of a stacked array, comprising

a) a plurality of seal ring elements (32) each having a generally V-shaped cross-sectional configuration; characterized by:



b) a plurality of back-up/energizing rings (34) interspersed between and in supporting relationship with the seal ring elements (32), said back-up/energizing rings (34) having a generally Y-shaped cross-sectional configuration;

c) a spring-energized lip seal ring (36) adjacent one of the back-up/energizing rings (34), said lip seal ring (36) including a central base and a pair of sealing lips (36a) extending therefrom whereby the lip seal ring has a generally U-shaped cross-sectional configuration; and

d) an adapter ring (38) having a generally T-shaped cross-sectional configuration and extending into a supportive relationship with the lip seal ring (36) to prevent dislocation of said seal ring when the packing assembly is in functional position between a valve stem (14) and a surrounding valve element (16), and said valve stem is cycled in a translatory manner.

2. A valve stem packing assembly according to Claim 1 including a second adapter ring (40) in supportive relationship with a seal ring element (32).

3. A valve stem packing assembly according to Claim 2 wherein the second adapter ring (40) has a radial face (40a) that is generally V-shaped in cross-sectional configuration and that resides against a seal ring element (32).

4. A valve stem packing assembly according to Claim 1 wherein the radial surfaces of the seal ring elements (32) and the radial surfaces of the back-up/energizing rings (34) define annular voids (54) therebetween that disappear when the packing assembly is properly installed in functional position in a properly sized valve packing chamber.

5. A valve stem packing assembly according to Claim 1 wherein the back-up/energizing rings (34) and the adjacent seal ring elements (32) are capable of migrating into a fluid-tight seal with opposing valve element surfaces in response to an axial piston-like force exerted by the lip seal ring (36).

Patentansprüche

1. Ventilspindeldichtungsanordnung in der Form einer gestapelten Reihe, mit einer Vielzahl von Dichtringelementen (32), die je im allgemeinen einen V-förmigen Querschnitt aufweisen, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß eine Vielzahl von Stütz-/Verstärkungsringen (34) vorgesehen ist, die zwischen den Dichtringelementen (32), diese abstützend, vorgesehen sind, wobei die Stütz-/Verstärkungsringe (34) im Querschnitt eine allgemein Y-förmige Gestalt aufweisen, daß ein von einer Feder beaufschlagter, mit Lippen versehener Dichtring (36) neben einem der Stütz-/Verstärkungsringe (34) vorgesehen ist, daß dieser Dichtring (36) einen Mittelboden und ein Paar Dichtlippen (36a) aufweist, die sich von ihm erstrecken, so daß der Dichtring (36) allgemein einen U-förmigen Querschnitt aufweist, daß sich ein Paßring (38) mit einem allgemein T-förmigen Querschnitt in Stützeingriff mit dem Dichtring (36) erstreckt, um ein Verschieben des Dichtrings zu verhindern, wenn

sich die Dichtungsanordnung im Betrieb zwischen einer Ventilspindel (14) und einem sie umgebenden Ventilelement (16) befindet, und daß die Ventilspindel translatorisch hin- und herbewegbar ist.

2. Ventilspindeldichtungsanordnung nach Anspruch 1, gekennzeichnet, durch einen zweiten Paßring (40), der ein Dichtringelement (32) abstützt.

3. Ventilspindeldichtungsanordnung nach Anspruch 2, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß der zweite Paßring (40) eine Radialfläche (40a) aufweist, die im Schritt die Form eines V aufweist und an einem Dichtringelement (32) anliegt.

4. Ventilspindeldichtungsanordnung nach Anspruch 1, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die radialen Flächen der Dichtringelemente (32) und die radialen Flächen der Stütz-/Verstärkungsringe (34) zwischen sich ringförmige Räume (54) begrenzen, welche verschwinden, wenn die Dichtungsanordnung zweckmäßig in ihrer Lage in einer geeignet bemessenen Ventildichtungskammer angeordnet ist.

5. Ventilspindeldichtungsanordnung nach Anspruch 1, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Stütz-/Verstärkungsringe (34) und die benachbarten Dichtringelemente (32) in fluiddichte Abdichtung mit gegenüberliegenden Ventilelementflächen in Ansprechen auf eine axialkolbenähnliche Kraft wandern können, die von dem Dichtring (36) ausgeübt ist.

Revendications

1. Ensemble garniture d'étanchéité pour tige de vanne constitué par un empilement, comprenant:

a) une pluralité d'éléments bagues d'étanchéité (32) dont chacun possède une configuration de section transversale à peu près en forme de V; caractérisé par

b) une pluralité de bagues d'appui/activation (34) intercalées entre les éléments bagues d'étanchéité (32) et en position relative de support par rapport à ces éléments, lesdites bagues d'appui/activation (34) ayant une configuration de section à peu près en forme de Y;

c) une bague d'étanchéité à lèvres (36) activée par un ressort, adjacente à l'une des bagues d'appui/activation (34), ladite bague d'étanchéité à lèvres (36) comprenant une base centrale et une paire de lèvres d'étanchéité (36a) qui partent de cette base, de sorte que la bague d'étanchéité à lèvres possède une configuration de section transversale à peu près en forme de U; et

d) une bague adaptatrice (38) ayant une configuration de section transversale à peu près en forme de T, et s'étendant en position relative de support par rapport à la bague d'étanchéité à lèvres (36), pour empêcher ladite bague étanchéité de se déplacer lorsque l'ensemble garniture d'étanchéité est en position de fonctionnement entre une tige de vanne (14) et un élément de vanne (16) qui l'entoure, et que ladite tige de vanne subit des déplacements en translation de façon cyclique.

2. Ensemble garniture d'étanchéité de tige de



(15)

vanne selon la revendication 1, comprenant une deuxième bague adaptatrice (40) en position relative de support par rapport à un élément bague d'étanchéité (32).

3. Ensemble garniture d'étanchéité pour tige de vanne selon la revendication 2, dans lequel la deuxième bague adaptatrice (40) possède une face radiale (40a) qui possède la configuration de section transversale à peu près en forme de V et qui est en appui contre un élément bague d'étanchéité (32).

4. Ensemble garniture d'étanchéité de tige de vanne selon la revendication 1, dans lequel les surfaces radiales des éléments bagues d'étanchéité (32) et les surfaces radiales des bagues

d'appui/activation (34) définissent entre elles des vides annulaires (34) qui disparaissent lorsque l'ensemble garniture d'étanchéité est correctement monté dans une position de fonctionnement dans une chambre de garniture de vanne correctement dimensionnée.

5. Ensemble garniture d'étanchéité de tige de vanne selon la revendication 1, dans lequel les bagues d'appui/activation (34) et les éléments bagues d'étanchéité (32) adjacents sont capables de migrer vers une position de joint étanche aux fluides par rapport aux surfaces opposées des éléments de la vanne, en réponse à une force axiale, analogue à une force de piston, qui est exercée par la bague d'étanchéité à lèvres (36).

20

25

30

35

40

45

50

60

5



* C L M S *