

US Patent & Trademark Office

Patent Public Search | Text View

United States Patent Application Publication

20250266673

Kind Code

A1

Publication Date

August 21, 2025

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DEVICES FOR OVERVOLTAGE, OVERCURRENT AND ARC FLASH PROTECTION

Abstract

A crowbar module includes first and second electrical terminals, a module housing, and first and second crowbar units. The first crowbar unit is disposed in the module housing and includes a first thyristor electrically connected between the first and second electrical terminals. The second crowbar unit is disposed in the module housing and includes a second thyristor electrically connected between the first and second electrical terminals in electrical parallel with the first crowbar unit.

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Family ID: 1000008574796

Appl. No.: 19/198508

Filed: May 05, 2025

Related U.S. Application Data

parent US continuation 18646937 20240426 parent-grant-document US 12322949 child US 19198508

parent US continuation 18050265 20221027 parent-grant-document US 12003088 child US 18646937

parent US continuation 16578779 20190923 parent-grant-document US 11527879 child US 18050265

parent US continuation 15071758 20160316 parent-grant-document US 10447023 child US 16578779

us-provisional-application US 62135284 20150319

Publication Classification

Int. Cl.: **H02H3/00** (20060101); **H02H1/00** (20060101); **H02H3/08** (20060101); **H02H9/02** (20060101); **H02H9/04** (20060101)

U.S. Cl.:

CPC **H02H3/00** (20130101); **H02H1/0015** (20130101); **H02H3/08** (20130101); **H02H9/02** (20130101); **H02H9/041** (20130101);

Background/Summary

RELATED APPLICATIONS [0001] The present application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 18/646,937, filed Apr. 26, 2024, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 18/050,265, now U.S. Pat. No. 12,003,088, filed Oct. 27, 2022, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 16/578,779, now U.S. Pat. No. 11,527,879, filed Sep. 23, 2019, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 15/071,758, now U.S. Pat. No. 10,447,023, filed Mar. 16, 2016, which claims the benefit of and priority from U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 62/135,284, filed Mar. 19, 2015, the disclosures of each are incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to circuit protection devices and, more particularly, to overvoltage, overcurrent and are flash protection devices and methods.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Frequently, excessive voltage or current is applied across service lines that deliver power to residences and commercial and institutional facilities. Such excess voltage or current spikes (transient overvoltages and surge currents) may result from lightning strikes, for example. The above events may be of particular concern in telecommunications distribution centers, hospitals and other facilities where equipment damage caused by overvoltages and/or current surges and resulting down time may be very costly.

[0004] Typically, sensitive electronic equipment may be protected against transient overvoltages and surge currents using Surge Protective Devices (SPDs). For example, brief reference is made to FIG. 1, which is a system including conventional overvoltage and surge protection. An overvoltage protection device **10** may be installed at a power input of equipment to be protected **50**, which is typically protected against overcurrents. Typical failure mode of an SPD is a short circuit. The overcurrent protection typically employed is a combination of an internal thermal disconnect to protect the device from overheating due to increased leakage currents and an external fuse to protect the device from higher fault currents. Different SPD technologies may avoid the use of the internal thermal disconnect because, in the event of failure, they change their operation mode to a low ohmic resistance. In this manner, the device can withstand significant short circuit currents. In this regard, there may be no operational need for an internal thermal disconnect. Further to the above, some embodiments that exhibit even higher short circuit withstand capabilities may also be protected only by the main circuit breaker of the installation without the need for a dedicated branch fuse.

[0005] Brief reference is now made to FIG. 2, which is a block diagram of a system including conventional surge protection. As illustrated, a three phase line may be connected to and supply electrical energy to one or more transformers **66**, which may in turn supply three phase electrical power to a main circuit breaker **68**. The three phase electrical power may be provided to one or

more distribution panels **62**. As illustrated, the three voltage lines of the three phase electrical power may be designated as **L1**, **L2** and **L3** and a neutral line may be designated as **N**. In some embodiments, the neutral line **N** may be conductively coupled to an earth ground.

[0006] Some embodiments include surge protection devices (SPDs) **104**. As illustrated, each of the SPDs **104** may be connected between respective ones of **L1**, **L2** and **L3**, and neutral (**N**). The SPD **104** may protect other equipment in the installation such as the distribution panel among others. In addition, the SPDs may be used to protect all equipment in case of prolonged overvoltages. However, such a condition may force the SPD to conduct a limited current for a prolonged period of time, which may result in the overheating of the SPD and possibly its failure (depending on the energy withstand capabilities the SPD can absorb and the level and duration of the overvoltage condition). A typical operating voltage of an SPD **104** in the present example may be about 400V (for 690V L-L systems). In this regard, the SPDs **104** will each perform as an insulator and thus not conduct current during normal operating conditions. In some embodiments, the operating voltage of the SPD's **104** is sufficiently higher than the normal line-to-neutral voltage to ensure that the SPD **104** will continue to perform as an insulator even in cases in which the system voltage increases due to overvoltage conditions that might arise as a result of a loss of power or other power system issues.

[0007] In the event of a surge current in, for example, **L1**, protection of power system load devices may necessitate providing a current path to ground for the excess current of the surge current. The surge current may generate a transient overvoltage between **L1** and **N**. Since the transient overvoltage significantly exceeds that operating voltage of SPD **104**, the SPD **104** will become conductive, allowing the excess current to flow from **L1** through SPD **104** to the neutral **N**. Once the surge current has been conducted to **N**, the overvoltage condition ends and the SPD **104** may become non-conducting again. However, in some cases, one or more SPD's **104** may begin to allow a leakage current to be conducted even at voltages that are lower than the operating voltage of the SPD's **104**.

[0008] Additionally, within an electrical device cabinet there may be devices that may protect the equipment inside the cabinet and proximate personnel from arc flashes that could be generated inside the cabinet. An arc flash occurring within a cabinet may create severe damages and is considered to be a very serious safety hazard for the personnel. As such, detection of the arc flash and interruption of the corresponding current should be as fast as possible to minimize damages and/or risks. However, especially in high power systems, during an arc flash the fault current could be limited to a lower level than the current threshold required for the main circuit breaker to trip fast enough. Faster response times may be required to avoid damages and/or risk. One solution employed by many manufacturers includes an electronic system to force the external tripping of the circuit breaker. During an arc flash there may be a significant increase of the pressure inside the cabinet and a significant increase in the illumination. An electronic circuit may use pressure and/or optical sensors to detect the presence of an arc flash and trip the circuit breaker. Other more recent techniques use readings of the voltage and current of the power system and trip the circuit breaker when specific patterns of these readings are encountered.

[0009] However, the time that a circuit breaker may take to disconnect the system from the power source (after being externally tripped by the electronic circuit) may be in the order of 100 milliseconds or more. During this time, a short circuit current that may be in a range of about 10 kAmperes to about 100 kAmperes may cause damage to the internal portions of the equipment as well as expose proximate personnel to significant danger.

SUMMARY

[0010] Some embodiments of the present invention are directed to a circuit protection device that includes an arc flash, overcurrent, overvoltage and surge protection system that is connected between a plurality of phase lines and a neutral line that are between an incoming power supply line and an electrical load panel in an electrical equipment.

[0011] In some embodiments, the arc flash, overcurrent, overvoltage and surge protection system includes a crowbar device that is coupled to the plurality of phase lines and to the neutral line and is configured to prevent an overvoltage condition by generating a low resistance current path from the plurality of phase lines to the neutral line, a plurality of surge protection devices that are connected to the plurality of phase lines and to the neutral line and that are configured to protect the equipment during an overvoltage condition by conducting a limited amount of current that corresponds to the overvoltage condition, and a crowbar trigger circuit that is configured to cause the crowbar device to turn on and provide the low resistance current path from ones of the plurality of phase lines to the neutral line.

[0012] Some embodiments provide that the crowbar device includes a plurality of overvoltage protection modules that are coupled between respective ones of the plurality of phase lines and the neutral line. In some embodiments, ones of the plurality of overvoltage protection modules each include a bidirectional thyristor and an inductor that is connected in series with the bidirectional thyristor. Some embodiments provide that ones of the plurality of overvoltage protection modules each include two thyristors that are connected in antiparallel with one another and an inductor that is connected in series with the two thyristors. In some embodiments, the ones of the plurality of overvoltage modules further comprise a snubber circuit that is connected in parallel with the two thyristors. Some embodiments provide that the snubber circuit includes a resistor and a capacitor that are connected in series with one another.

[0013] In some embodiments, the arc flash, overcurrent, overvoltage and surge protection system further includes an arc flash detection system that is configured to detect an arc flash within the equipment and to generate and send an arc flash signal to the crowbar trigger circuit.

[0014] Some embodiments provide that the crowbar trigger circuit includes a plurality of thyristor trigger circuits that are configured to generate thyristor trigger signals that are received by the crowbar device. In some embodiments, the crowbar trigger circuit further includes a power supply and voltage hold-up circuit that is configured to receive electrical power for the trigger circuit and to provide power to the trigger circuit for a time period after the electrical power for the trigger circuit is lost, an interface circuit that is configured to receive inputs corresponding to voltages of the plurality of phase lines, current flow through the plurality of phase lines, an arc flash signal and/or temperatures or respective surge protection devices, and a microcontroller that is configured to receive data from the interface circuit, to process the received data and to generate and send trigger signals one or more of the plurality of thyristor trigger circuits, an alarm signal to a remote alerting device and/or a trip signal to a main circuit breaker. Some embodiments provide that the power supply and voltage holdup circuit includes a plurality of DC-DC converters that are each operable to provide voltages to ones of the plurality of thyristor trigger circuits and a holdup circuit that is configured to hold a voltage that is provided to the plurality of DC-dc converters.

[0015] Some embodiments provide that the crowbar device includes a plurality of pairs of antiparallel connected thyristors that are coupled between respective ones of the plurality of phase lines and the neutral line, a plurality of inductors that are connected in series respective ones of the plurality of pairs of antiparallel thyristors, and a plurality of surge protection devices that are connected between respective ones of the plurality of phase lines and the neutral line.

[0016] In some embodiments, the arc flash, overcurrent, overvoltage and surge protection system includes a crowbar device that is coupled to and between the plurality of phase lines and is configured to prevent an overvoltage condition by selectively generating a low resistance current path between the plurality of phase lines, a plurality of surge protection devices that are connected to and between the plurality of phase lines and that are configured to protect the equipment during an overvoltage condition by conducting a limited amount of current that corresponds to the overvoltage condition, and a crowbar trigger circuit that is configured to cause the crowbar device to turn on and provide the low resistance current path from ones of the plurality of phase lines to the neutral line.

[0017] Some embodiments provide that the arc flash, overcurrent, overvoltage and surge protection system includes a crowbar device that is coupled to the plurality of phase lines and to the neutral line and is configured to prevent an overvoltage condition by generating a low resistance current path from the plurality of phase lines to the neutral line, a plurality of surge protection devices that are connected to the plurality of phase lines and to the neutral line and that are configured to protect the equipment during an overvoltage condition by conducting a limited amount of current that corresponds to the overvoltage condition, and an arc flash trigger circuit that is configured to cause the crowbar device to turn on and provide the low resistance current path from ones of the plurality of phase lines to the neutral line. In some embodiments, the crowbar device includes a plurality of self-triggering crowbar modules that are connected to the neutral line and respective ones of the plurality of phase lines.

[0018] In some embodiments, the plurality of self-triggering crowbar modules each include two thyristors that are connected in antiparallel with one another, an inductor that is connected in series with the two thyristors, and a crowbar trigger circuit that is configured to receive a current signal from a current sensor on the corresponding one of the plurality of phase lines and to cause at least one of the two thyristors to provide a low resistance current path between the corresponding one of the plurality of phase lines and the neutral line responsive to the current signal exceeding a current threshold.

[0019] In some embodiments, the crowbar trigger circuit is configured to generate a trigger signal in the absence of any signal from the arc flash trigger circuit. Some embodiments provide that the crowbar trigger circuit is configured to provide self triggering of the corresponding one of the plurality of crowbar modules during a start-up period of the equipment. In some embodiments, the arc flash trigger circuit is configured to trigger the plurality of crowbar modules responsive to detecting an arc flash after the start-up period of the equipment.

[0020] Some embodiments provide that the ones of the plurality of crowbar modules further include a snubber circuit that is connected in parallel with the two thyristors and that the snubber circuit includes a resistor and a capacitor that are connected in series with one another.

[0021] In some embodiments, the arc flash, overcurrent, overvoltage and surge protection system further includes an arc flash detection system that is configured to detect an arc flash within the equipment and to generate and send an arc flash signal to the arc flash trigger circuit.

[0022] Some embodiments provide that the arc flash, overcurrent, overvoltage and surge protection system further includes a threshold selector that is connected to the arc flash trigger circuit and is configured to provide a threshold current selection signal corresponding to a current threshold value. In some embodiments, the threshold selector includes a user input device that receives a user input and that provides the threshold current selection signal to the arc flash trigger circuit. Some embodiments provide that the threshold current selection signal includes a discrete binary value, and wherein a lowest value of the discrete binary value corresponds to a default threshold current.

[0023] Some embodiments of the present invention are directed to an arc flash, overcurrent, overvoltage and surge protection system that includes a crowbar device that is coupled to and between a plurality of phase lines and is configured to prevent an overvoltage condition by selectively generating a low resistance current path between the plurality of phase lines and a plurality of surge protection devices that are connected to respective ones of the plurality of phase lines and to the crowbar device and that are configured to protect the equipment during an overvoltage condition by conducting a limited amount of current that corresponds to the overvoltage condition.

[0024] In some embodiments, ones of the plurality of surge protection devices each include a first terminal that is connected to a corresponding one of the plurality of phase lines and a second terminal that is connected to the crowbar device. Some embodiments provide that the crowbar device includes a plurality of phase terminals that are connected to the plurality of surge protection devices and a plurality of thyristors that are connected between different pairs of the phase

terminals.

[0025] Some embodiments provide that the crowbar device further includes a crowbar trigger circuit that is operable to generate thyristor trigger signals to the plurality of thyristors responsive to detecting a fault condition on the phase lines. In some embodiments, the crowbar trigger circuit includes a rectification circuit that generates a direct current (DC) signal corresponding to the voltages between the plurality of phase lines, a comparator that compares the DC signal from the rectification circuit to a reference signal, and a plurality of isolation drivers that receive a comparator output, and, responsive to the comparator output indicating that the DC signal exceeds the reference signal, generates a trigger signal that turns on the plurality of thyristors.

[0026] In some embodiments, the surge protection devices comprise metal oxide varistors.

[0027] Some embodiments of the present invention are directed to a surge protection system that includes a plurality of crowbar modules that are coupled to a plurality of phase lines and that are configured to prevent an overvoltage condition by selectively generating a low resistance current path between the plurality of phase lines and a neutral line and a plurality of surge protection devices that are connected in series with respective ones of the plurality of crowbar modules to provide a plurality of series circuits that each include one of the plurality of crowbar modules and one of the plurality of surge protection devices, wherein each of series circuits is connected between a corresponding one of the plurality of phase lines and the neutral line.

[0028] In some embodiments, ones of the plurality of surge protection devices each include a first terminal that is connected to a corresponding one of the plurality of phase lines and a second terminal that is connected to a corresponding one of the plurality of crowbar modules. In some embodiments, ones of the plurality of crowbar modules each include a plurality of antiparallel thyristors that are connected between a corresponding one of the plurality of surge protection devices and the neutral line and a crowbar trigger circuit that is operable to generate thyristor trigger signals to the plurality of thyristors responsive to detecting a fault condition on the phase lines.

[0029] In some embodiments, the crowbar trigger circuit includes a rectification circuit that generates a direct current (DC) signal corresponding to a voltage on the corresponding one of the plurality of phase lines, a comparator that compares the DC signal from the rectification circuit to a reference signal, a driver that receives the comparator output, and, responsive to the comparator output indicating that the DC signal exceeds the reference signal, generates a thyristor drive signal, and an optical isolator that generates a thyristor trigger signal responsive to receiving the thyristor drive signal from the driver, wherein the thyristor trigger signal turns the pair of antiparallel thyristors on to provide a low resistance current path between the corresponding one of the surge protectors and the neutral line.

[0030] According to embodiments of the invention, a crowbar module includes first and second electrical terminals, a module housing, and first and second crowbar units. The first crowbar unit is disposed in the module housing and includes a first thyristor electrically connected between the first and second electrical terminals. The second crowbar unit is disposed in the module housing and includes a second thyristor electrically connected between the first and second electrical terminals in electrical parallel with the first crowbar unit.

[0031] In some embodiments, the first thyristor is connected in antiparallel to the second thyristor.

[0032] The crowbar module may include a snubber circuit disposed in the module housing and electrically connected between the first and second electrical terminals in electrical parallel with each of the first and second crowbar units.

[0033] The crowbar module may include a coil assembly connected electrically in series between the first terminal and each of the first and second crowbar units. In some embodiments, the crowbar module includes a snubber circuit disposed in the module housing and electrically connected between the first and second electrical terminals in electrical parallel with each of the first and second crowbar units.

[0034] In some embodiments, the coil assembly includes: an electrically conductive coil member, the coil member including a spirally extending coil strip defining a spiral coil channel; and an electrically insulating casing including a separator wall portion that fills the coil channel.

[0035] In some embodiments, the module housing includes a cover defining an enclosed cavity, the first and second crowbar units are contained in the enclosed cavity, and the crowbar module further includes a filler material that fills a volume in the enclosed cavity not occupied by the first and second crowbar units. In some embodiments, the filler material is an epoxy.

[0036] The crowbar module may include a metal-oxide varistor device disposed in the module housing and electrically connected between the first and second electrical terminals in parallel with each of the first and second crowbar units.

[0037] The crowbar module may include a trigger circuit disposed in the module housing and electrically connected to the first and second crowbar units. In some embodiments, the crowbar module includes an electrical connection to an external current sensor.

[0038] According to some embodiments, the first thyristor includes a first contact surface that is one of an anode and a cathode, and a second contact surface that is the other of an anode and a cathode, and the first crowbar unit includes an electrically conductive first electrode contacting the first contact surface, and an electrically conductive second electrode contacting the second contact surface. In some embodiments, the first electrode is a unitary metal unit housing member including an end wall and a side wall, the end wall and the side wall define a unit housing cavity, the thyristor is disposed in the unit housing cavity. The crowbar module may include a biasing device biasing at least one of the first and second electrode members against the first or second contact surface.

[0039] According to some embodiments, the first crowbar unit includes: a unit housing defining an enclosed chamber, the first thyristor being disposed in the enclosed chamber; a wire port defined in a wall of the unit housing between the enclosed chamber and an exterior of the unit housing; a cable gland mounted in the wire port; and an electrical lead extending through the cable gland from the exterior of the unit housing and electrically connected to the first thyristor.

[0040] The electrical lead wire may be terminated at a control terminal of the first thyristor. The crowbar module may include a second electrical lead wire extending through the cable gland from the exterior of the unit housing and electrically connected to a reference terminal of the first thyristor.

[0041] In some embodiments, the cable gland is bonded to the electrical lead wire. In some embodiments, the cable gland includes a resin that is bonded to the electrical lead wire. In some embodiments, the resin is an epoxy resin.

[0042] According to some embodiments, the cable gland includes: a tubular outer fitting secured in the wire port; and a sealing plug mounted in the outer fitting and surrounding the electrical lead wire; wherein the sealing plug fills the radial space between the electrical lead wire and the outer fitting. In some embodiments, the sealing plug is bonded to the electrical lead wire. In some embodiments, the outer fitting is formed of a polymeric material bonded to the unit housing.

[0043] According to some embodiments, the cable gland mechanically secures the electrical lead wire to the unit housing and hermetically seals the wire port.

[0044] According to embodiments of the invention, a crowbar unit includes a unit housing defining an enclosed chamber, a thyristor disposed in the enclosed chamber, a wire port defined in a wall of the unit housing between the enclosed chamber and an exterior of the unit housing, a cable gland mounted in the wire port, and an electrical lead extending through the cable gland from the exterior of the unit housing and electrically connected to the thyristor.

[0045] In some embodiments, the thyristor includes a first contact surface that is one of an anode and a cathode, and a second contact surface that is the other of an anode and a cathode, and the crowbar unit includes an electrically conductive first electrode contacting the first contact surface, and an electrically conductive second electrode contacting the second contact surface.

[0046] According to some embodiments, the first electrode is a unitary metal housing member

including an end wall and a side wall, the housing member forms a part of the unit housing and defines a housing cavity, and the thyristor is disposed in the housing cavity.

[0047] The crowbar unit may include a biasing device biasing at least one of the first and second electrode members against the first or second contact surface.

[0048] In some embodiments, the electrical lead wire is terminated at a control terminal of the thyristor. The crowbar unit may include a second electrical lead wire extending through the cable gland from the exterior of the unit housing and electrically connected to a reference terminal of the thyristor.

[0049] According to some embodiments, the cable gland is bonded to the electrical lead wire. In some embodiments, the cable gland includes a resin that is bonded to the electrical lead wire. In some embodiments, the resin is an epoxy resin.

[0050] According to some embodiments, the cable gland includes a tubular outer fitting secured in the wire port, and a sealing plug mounted in the outer fitting and surrounding the electrical lead wire, wherein the sealing plug fills the radial space between the electrical lead wire and the outer fitting. In some embodiments, the sealing plug is bonded to the electrical lead wire. In some embodiments, the outer fitting is formed of a polymeric material bonded to the unit housing.

[0051] According to some embodiments, the cable gland mechanically secures the electrical lead wire to the unit housing and hermetically seals the wire port.

[0052] In some embodiments, the thyristor is a bi-directional thyristor.

[0053] According to method embodiments of the invention, a method for forming a crowbar unit includes: providing a unit housing defining an enclosed chamber and including a wire port defined in a wall of the unit housing between the enclosed chamber and an exterior of the unit housing; mounting a thyristor in the enclosed chamber; routing an electrical lead wire through the wire port; sealing the electrical lead wire in the wire port with a cable gland; and electrically connecting the electrical lead wire to the thyristor.

[0054] In some embodiments, sealing the electrical lead wire in the wire port with a cable gland includes: forming a cable gland, including inserting an electrical lead wire in a tubular outer fitting, introducing a liquid sealing material into the outer fitting about the electrical lead wire, and curing or hardening the liquid sealing material about the electrical lead wire to seal the electrical lead wire in the outer fitting; and mounting the electrical lead wire and the cable gland in the wire port. In some embodiments, the liquid sealing material is a resin.

[0055] According to embodiments of the invention, a crowbar device includes a device housing and a crowbar module and a current sensor disposed in the device housing. The crowbar module includes: a module housing; a thyristor disposed in the module housing; a self-trigger circuit disposed in the module housing; and a snubber circuit disposed in the module housing.

[0056] According to embodiments of the invention, a crowbar system includes a crowbar module and an external trigger and alarm interface circuit. The crowbar module includes: a module housing; a thyristor disposed in the module housing; a coil disposed in the module housing; a trigger circuit disposed in the module housing; and a snubber circuit disposed in the module housing. The external trigger and alarm interface circuit is electrically connected to the crowbar module.

[0057] It is noted that aspects of the invention described with respect to one embodiment, may be incorporated in a different embodiment although not specifically described relative thereto. That is, all embodiments and/or features of any embodiment can be combined in any way and/or combination. These and other objects and/or aspects of the present invention are explained in detail in the specification set forth below.

Description

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0058] The accompanying figures are included to provide a further understanding of the present invention, and are incorporated in and constitute a part of this specification. The drawings illustrate some embodiments of the present invention and, together with the description, serve to explain principles of the present invention.

[0059] FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a system including conventional surge protection.

[0060] FIG. 2 is a block diagram of a system including conventional surge protection.

[0061] FIG. 3 is a block diagram illustrating an arc flash and surge protection system according to some embodiments of the present invention.

[0062] FIG. 4 is a block diagram illustrating an arc flash and surge protection system according to some embodiments of the present invention.

[0063] FIG. 5 is a schematic diagram representing a circuit including an arc flash and surge protection system in a switchgear cabinet according to some embodiments of the present invention.

[0064] FIG. 6 is a schematic block diagram illustrating a trigger circuit as briefly described above regarding FIG. 4, according to some embodiments of the present invention.

[0065] FIG. 7 is a schematic block diagram illustrating a power supply and voltage hold-up circuit as discussed in reference to FIG. 6.

[0066] FIG. 8 is a block diagram illustrating a DC-DC isolated converter as discussed in reference to FIG. 7.

[0067] FIG. 9 is a schematic block diagram illustrating a thyristor trigger circuit as discussed in reference to FIG. 6.

[0068] FIG. 10 is a schematic diagram representing a circuit including an arc flash and surge protection system according to some embodiments of the present invention.

[0069] FIG. 11 is a schematic diagram representing a circuit including an arc flash and surge protection system according to some embodiments of the present invention.

[0070] FIG. 12 is a schematic diagram representing a circuit including an arc flash and surge protection system according to some embodiments of the present invention.

[0071] FIG. 13 is a top perspective view of a crowbar system and a trigger module according to some embodiments of the present invention.

[0072] FIG. 14 is a cross-sectional view of the crowbar system of FIG. 13 taken along the line 14-14 of FIG. 13.

[0073] FIG. 15 is a top perspective view of a crowbar module forming a part of the crowbar system of FIG. 13.

[0074] FIG. 16 is a fragmentary, exploded, top perspective view of the crowbar module of FIG. 15.

[0075] FIG. 17 is an exploded, top perspective view of a coil assembly forming a part of the crowbar module of FIG. 15.

[0076] FIG. 18 is a cross-sectional, bottom perspective view of a casing forming a part of the coil assembly of FIG. 17.

[0077] FIG. 19 is an exploded, bottom perspective view of a crowbar unit forming a part of the crowbar module of FIG. 15.

[0078] FIG. 20 is a cross-sectional, top perspective view of the crowbar unit of FIG. 19.

[0079] FIG. 21 is an enlarged, fragmentary, cross-sectional view of the crowbar unit of FIG. 19.

[0080] FIG. 22 is a rear perspective view of the connector module of FIG. 13.

[0081] FIG. 23 is a fragmentary, perspective view of a crowbar module according to further embodiments of the invention.

[0082] FIG. 24 is a schematic diagram illustrating an arc flash and surge protection system used in protecting equipment according to some embodiments of the present invention.

[0083] FIG. 25 is a schematic block diagram illustrating a crowbar module as briefly described above regarding FIG. 24, according to some embodiments of the present invention.

[0084] FIG. **26** is a schematic block diagram illustrating a trigger circuit of the crowbar module as briefly described above regarding FIG. **25**, according to some embodiments of the present invention.

[0085] FIG. **27** is a graph illustrating voltage and current values during an overvoltage condition according to some embodiments of the present invention.

[0086] FIG. **28** is a schematic block diagram illustrating an arc flash trigger circuit of the crowbar module as briefly described above regarding FIG. **24**, according to some embodiments of the present invention.

[0087] FIG. **29** is a schematic block diagram illustrating a surge protection system used in protecting equipment according to some embodiments of the present invention.

[0088] FIG. **30** is a schematic block diagram illustrating a crowbar device as briefly described above regarding FIG. **29**, according to some embodiments of the present invention.

[0089] FIG. **31** is a schematic block diagram illustrating a surge protection system used in protecting equipment according to some embodiments of the present invention.

[0090] FIG. **32** is a schematic block diagram illustrating a crowbar module as briefly described above regarding FIG. **31**, according to some embodiments of the present invention.

[0091] FIG. **33** is a top perspective view of a crowbar system according to some embodiments of the present invention.

[0092] FIG. **34** is a top perspective view of a crowbar module forming a part of the crowbar system of FIG. **33**.

[0093] FIG. **35** is a fragmentary, exploded, top perspective view of the crowbar module of FIG. **33**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION

[0094] The present invention now will be described more fully hereinafter with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which illustrative embodiments of the invention are shown. In the drawings, the relative sizes of regions or features may be exaggerated for clarity. This invention may, however, be embodied in many different forms and should not be construed as limited to the embodiments set forth herein; rather, these embodiments are provided so that this disclosure will be thorough and complete, and will fully convey the scope of the invention to those skilled in the art.

[0095] It will be understood that when an element is referred to as being “coupled” or “connected” to another element, it can be directly coupled or connected to the other element or intervening elements may also be present. In contrast, when an element is referred to as being “directly coupled” or “directly connected” to another element, there are no intervening elements present. Like numbers refer to like elements throughout.

[0096] In addition, spatially relative terms, such as “under”, “below”, “lower”, “over”, “upper” and the like, may be used herein for ease of description to describe one element or feature's relationship to another element(s) or feature(s) as illustrated in the figures. It will be understood that the spatially relative terms are intended to encompass different orientations of the device in use or operation in addition to the orientation depicted in the figures. For example, if the device in the figures is turned over, elements described as “under” or “beneath” other elements or features would then be oriented “over” the other elements or features. Thus, the exemplary term “under” can encompass both an orientation of over and under. The device may be otherwise oriented (rotated 90 degrees or at other orientations) and the spatially relative descriptors used herein interpreted accordingly.

[0097] Well-known functions or constructions may not be described in detail for brevity and/or clarity.

[0098] As used herein the expression “and/or” includes any and all combinations of one or more of the associated listed items.

[0099] The terminology used herein is for the purpose of describing particular embodiments only and is not intended to be limiting of the invention. As used herein, the singular forms “a”, “an” and “the” are intended to include the plural forms as well, unless the context clearly indicates

otherwise. It will be further understood that the terms “comprises” and/or “comprising,” when used in this specification, specify the presence of stated features, integers, steps, operations, elements, and/or components, but do not preclude the presence or addition of one or more other features, integers, steps, operations, elements, components, and/or groups thereof.

[0100] Unless otherwise defined, all terms (including technical and scientific terms) used herein have the same meaning as commonly understood by one of ordinary skill in the art to which this invention belongs. It will be further understood that terms, such as those defined in commonly used dictionaries, should be interpreted as having a meaning that is consistent with their meaning in the context of the relevant art and will not be interpreted in an idealized or overly formal sense unless expressly so defined herein.

[0101] According to embodiments described herein, an arc flash and surge protection system may protect electrical distribution and control equipment from arc flashes that may be generated inside an enclosure, such as an electrical switchgear cabinet. In the event of an arc in the absence of protections provided herein, a short circuit corresponding to the arc may cause the circuit breaker to trip and open the circuit within about 100 milliseconds. In the case of lower short circuit current due to, for example, circuit impedance, an arc flash detection system may trigger the circuit breaker to trip. However, during this period, the short circuit current, which may be between about 10 kA to about 100 KA, will damage internal equipment within the switchgear cabinet, and may present a serious safety hazard for personnel proximate the switchgear cabinet.

[0102] As disclosed herein, the above effects may be eliminated by using a crowbar device that has a very fast response time (e.g., less than about 5 milliseconds) and that may conduct the fault current to eliminate the arc until the circuit breaker trips and disconnects the switchgear cabinet from the power source.

[0103] The crowbar device may include two thyristors (one for each direction of AC current) that when triggered may create a short that will conduct the current and eliminate the arc flash.

However, as provided herein, thyristors may be protected against damage from false triggers and/or overvoltages. False triggers may be protected against using circuit components described herein and overvoltage protection may be provided using surge protection devices that may be connected in parallel with the overvoltage protection device. The use of the surge protective device may protect the thyristors of the crowbar device from false trigger and other equipment in the installation.

[0104] In some embodiments, the crowbar device may protect the surge protection device in the event that the surge protection device has failed. For example, typical failure mode of such devices may be a short circuit that is interrupted by either an internal thermal disconnect and/or an external fuse/circuit breaker. In this manner, the crowbar device may further protect the surge protection device in case of its failure and therefore obviate a need for a thermal disconnect and/or a series fuse/circuit breaker.

[0105] Some embodiments provide that the crowbar device may be implemented in several different ways. A first example provides for a single operation in that the crowbar device is used only once and a replacement crowbar device is provided to replace the used crowbar device. A second example includes a crowbar device that can be used multiple times. In this example, the crowbar device may withstand the short circuit current until the circuit breaker trips. As such, the crowbar device may be restored after the fault event and allow a possible reclosure of the main circuit breaker that will permit the installation to resume normal operation (provided that the problem that caused the tripping of the crowbar system has been solved).

[0106] To trigger the crowbar device, a separate electronic circuit may be used. This circuit may receive the trigger signal from the arc flash detector circuit as an input and may trigger the crowbar device and/or the main circuit breaker. In some embodiments, this circuit may also receive voltage and current readings of the power lines and current readings of the surge protection devices as inputs. In this manner, the electronic system may indicate the presence of a short circuit anywhere

downstream of the crowbar device, if there is an prolonged overvoltage condition and if the surge protective devices failed. In any of the above conditions (or any other condition that is required and can be detected by using these sensors or additional sensors) the electronic system may trigger the crowbar device and the main circuit breaker.

[0107] In addition, the electronic circuit may also provide an alarm signal to indicate the presence of and/or type of problem that caused the tripping of the crowbar device. Some embodiments provide that the crowbar device may be triggered responsive to one or more of the following conditions and/or events: [0108] Arc Flash inside the cabinet; [0109] Failure of the surge protective device; [0110] Prolonged overvoltage or overcurrent conditions; [0111] Short circuit downstream the crowbar device; [0112] Any other pattern of electrical disturbance in the system that can be detected using the existing sensors or by installing additional sensors for that reason; and [0113] Remote manual trigger.

[0114] Reference is now made to FIG. 3, which is a block diagram illustrating an arc flash, overvoltage, overcurrent and surge protection system according to some embodiments of the present invention. Some embodiments of the present invention may be applicable to the protection of equipment corresponding to switchgear systems used in industrial installations including secondary distribution panels and/or a service entrance section of electrical generation facilities, including, for example, wind turbine generators. However, such embodiments are non-limiting. For example, arc flash and surge protection systems described herein may be applicable to many different types of systems that may be susceptible to overvoltage conditions, surge currents and/or arc flash faults. For example, medium and/or low voltage switchgear for controlling and distributing single or multiphase electrical power may use arc flash and surge protections systems as described herein. In some embodiments, a switchgear cabinet **60** may include an arc flash, overvoltage, over current and surge protection system **100** configured therein to protect the equipment **50**, the switchgear cabinet **60** and other components included thereon and/or personnel proximate the switchgear cabinet **60**.

[0115] Brief reference is now made to FIG. 4, which is a block diagram illustrating an arc flash, overvoltage, over current and surge protection system according to some embodiments of the present invention. As illustrated, a three phase line may be connected to and supply electrical energy to one or more transformers **66**, which may in turn supply three phase electrical power to a main circuit breaker **68**. The three phase electrical power may be provided to one or more distribution panels **62**. As illustrated, the three voltage lines of the three phase electrical power may designated as L1, L2 and L3 and a neutral line may be designated as N. In some embodiments, the neutral line N may be conductively coupled to an earth ground.

[0116] Some embodiments include an arc flash, overvoltage, overcurrent and surge protection system **100** connected between the phase lines L1, L2 and L3, and neutral (N). The arc flash, overvoltage, overcurrent and surge protection system **100** may protect other equipment in the installation such as the distribution panel **62** among others. In some embodiments, the arc flash, overvoltage, over current and surge protection system **100** may be coupled to and/or receive one or more signals from an arc flash detection system **64** that may be in a distribution panel **62** and/or other equipment in the installation.

[0117] As discussed above, an arc flash, overvoltage, overcurrent and surge protection system **100** may implemented in a system corresponding to power distribution switchgear **60** that is configured to distribute multiphase electrical power. For example, reference is now made to FIG. 5, which is a schematic diagram representing a circuit including an arc flash and surge protection system in a three phase switchgear cabinet according to some embodiments of the present invention. As illustrated, a three phase line may be connected to and supply electrical energy to one or more transformers **66**, which may in turn supply three phase electrical power to a main circuit breaker **68** in the switchgear cabinet **60**. Within the switchgear cabinet **60**, the three phase electrical power may be provided to one or more distribution panels **62** that may or may not be within the

switchgear cabinet **60**. As illustrated, the three voltage lines of the three phase electrical power may be designated as L1, L2 and L3 and a neutral line may be designated as N. In some embodiments, the neutral line N may be conductively coupled to an earth ground.

[0118] In some embodiments, the arc flash, overvoltage, overcurrent and surge protection system **100** may include a crowbar device **102** that is operable to prevent an overvoltage condition by generating a low resistance path from the three voltage lines L1, L2, L3 to the neutral line N. Although some embodiments are discussed herein with reference to an overvoltage condition, such embodiments may also refer to an overcurrent condition that may or may not be a result of an overvoltage condition. Some embodiments provide that the crowbar device may be triggered by a trigger circuit **106**.

[0119] As illustrated, the crowbar device **102** may include an overvoltage protection module **120** corresponding to each of the three phases L1, L2 and L3. Each overvoltage protection module **120** may include two thyristors (e.g., TH5 and TH6) that are electrically coupled in parallel with one another, but with opposite polarities. Stated differently, an anode of a first thyristor (e.g., TH5) of the pair of thyristors may be coupled to a cathode of the second thyristor (e.g., TH6) of the pair of thyristors and a cathode of the first thyristor (TH5) of the pair of thyristors may be coupled to the anode of the second thyristor (TH6) of the pair of thyristors. In this manner, when the thyristors are triggered to be in a conductive state, each half of an alternating current waveform may be conducted from the phase to the neutral.

[0120] In some embodiments, an overvoltage protection module **120** may include a circuit of a resistor R and a capacitor C arranged in series with one another, such that the resistor-capacitor series RC is connected in parallel with the two thyristors (e.g., TH5 and TH6). Although described and illustrated as a single resistor R and capacitor C, embodiments may include more than one resistor and/or more than one capacitor to achieve the desired resistive and/or capacitive performance, but also to use extra R and C for redundancy, as the operation of this circuit may be important to prevent a false triggering of the thyristors. The snubber circuit may slow down a rate of change in voltage (dV/dt) that may otherwise result in falsely triggering the thyristor. For example, in the absence of the RC snubber circuit, the thyristor may be triggered by electrical noise that is unrelated to an actual overvoltage condition. The capacitor C may reduce the rate of change in voltage (dV/dt) together with the resistor R. The inductance L and the resistance R may limit the inrush of current of the high capacitance value of the capacitor C when the circuit is energized.

[0121] Some embodiments provide that an inductor L is arranged in series with the pair of antiparallel-connected thyristors. The inductor L may limit a rate of change in current (di/dt) through the thyristors, which might otherwise damage the thyristors. Also, L, combined with the RC snubber circuit, reduces the rate of change in voltage (dV/dt) at the thyristors in case of an overvoltage generated in the power system. In this manner, a self-trigger of thyristors may be prevented.

[0122] Some embodiments provide that in a three-phase power system, a crowbar device **102** includes three overvoltage protection modules **120** that may be coupled from respective phase conductors L1, L2 and L3 to a neutral N. In some embodiments, each of the overvoltage protection modules **120** is a modular component that includes all of the functional components therein in a single assembly. Some embodiments provide that multiple (e.g., three in a three-phase power system) overvoltage protection modules **120** may be configured as a single assembly including the components and functionality for overvoltage protection for all phases in a single assembly.

[0123] Some embodiments include surge protection devices (SPDs) **104**. As illustrated, each of the SPDs **104** may be connected between respective ones of L1, L2 and L3, and neutral (N). The use of the SPD may protect the thyristors of the crowbar device during lightning events and/or transient overvoltage conditions, as well as protect other equipment in the installation. In addition, the SPDs may be used to protect all equipment in case of prolonged overvoltages. However, such a condition may force the SPD to conduct a limited current for a prolonged period of time, which may result in

the overheating of the SPD and possibly its failure (depending on the energy withstand capabilities the SPD can absorb and the level and duration of the overvoltage condition). Such event may be addressed by tripping the crowbar device. A typical operating voltage of an SPD **104** in the present example may be about 400V (for 690V L-L systems). In this regard, the SPDs **104** will each perform as an insulator and thus not conduct current during normal operating conditions. In some embodiments, the operating voltage of the SPD's **104** is sufficiently higher than the normal line-to-neutral voltage to ensure that the SPD **104** will continue to perform as an insulator even in cases in which the system voltage increases due to overvoltage conditions that might arise as a result of a loss of power or other power system issues.

[0124] In the event of a surge current in, for example, L**1**, protection of power system load devices may necessitate providing a current path to ground for the excess current of the surge current. The surge current may generate a transient overvoltage between L**1** and N. Since the transient overvoltage significantly exceeds the operating voltage of SPD **104**, the SPD **104** will become conductive, allowing the excess current to flow from L**1** through SPD **104** to the neutral N.

[0125] Once the surge current has been conducted to N, the overvoltage condition ends and the SPD **104** becomes non-conducting again. However, in some cases, one or more SPD's **104** may begin to allow a leakage current to be conducted even at voltages that are lower than the operating voltage of the SPD's **104**. Under such conditions, the leakage current may be measured using, for example, current transformers **105** that may provide leakage current values to the trigger circuit **106**.

[0126] An arc flash detection system **64** may be configured to detect an arc flash within the switchgear cabinet **60** using one or more sensors and/or sensor types including photosensors, pressure sensors and/or current transformers, among others. The arc flash detection system may provide an arc flash detection signal (AFD) to the trigger circuit **106**.

[0127] The trigger circuit **106** may receive inputs corresponding the line voltages L**1**, L**2**, L**3**, the line currents I**1**, I**2**, I**3**, the SPD leakage currents Is**1**, Is**2**, Is**3**, and the arc flash detection signal AFD. As described in more detail below, the trigger circuit **106** may, in response to a fault circumstance, cause the crowbar device **102** to turn on, thus providing a low resistance current path from the lines L**1**, L**2**, L**3** to the neutral N, cause the main circuit breaker **68** to trip, and/or cause the SPD's to begin conducting. In some embodiments, the trigger circuit **106** may further generate and/or transmit an alarm signal to one or more other types of monitoring, logging or alarm equipment.

[0128] Some embodiments provide that the trigger circuit **106** is powered through a trigger circuit power supply **65**, such as a single phase alternating current power source and/or a direct current power source. Some embodiments provide that the trigger circuit power supply **65** may be coupled to the trigger circuit **106** via one or more circuit interrupters or circuit breakers **67** and may be thus protected by the SPDs **104**.

[0129] Reference is now made to FIG. **6**, which is a schematic block diagram illustrating a trigger circuit as briefly described above regarding FIG. **5**, according to some embodiments of the present invention. In some embodiments, a trigger circuit **106** may include a power supply and voltage hold-up circuit **166**, which may receive single phase alternating current electrical power and/or direct current electrical power to power the trigger circuit. The power supply and voltage hold-up circuit **166** may include a voltage hold-up circuit that may provide power to the trigger circuit for at least 100 milliseconds after a condition which eliminates the availability of the electrical power received from the a trigger circuit power supply **65**.

[0130] In this manner, even with a loss of trigger circuit power due to a fault in another portion of the circuit, the power supply and voltage hold-up circuit **166** maintains sufficient voltage for the trigger circuit **106** to function until the circuit breaker is capable of tripping. For example, during this period, trigger signals to all of the thyristors may be maintained continually to keep the thyristors in a conducting state. Thus, the thyristors may be maintained in a conducting state until

the main circuit breaker **68** has tripped. In the alternative, if a trigger signal to the thyristors is lost, the thyristors will only allow very limited current flow therethrough, which may result in the arc flash restarting.

[0131] Brief reference is now made to FIG. 7, which is a schematic block diagram illustrating a power supply and voltage hold-up circuit **166** as discussed in reference to FIG. 6 above. In some embodiments, the power supply and voltage hold-up circuit **166** is configured to receive electrical power as a single phase alternating current (AC) power source including a voltage line L.sub.p and a neutral line N.sub.p. In such embodiments, the received electrical power may be converted from AC to direct current (DC) using an AC-DC rectification unit **180**. The resulting DC power may be smoothed using a smoothing capacitor **182**.

[0132] The DC power may be provided to a voltage hold-up circuit **184** that may include a holding resistor R_h that is connected in parallel with a holding diode D_h. The parallel combination of the holding resistor R_h and the holding diode D_h may be connected in series with a holding capacitor C_h. Some embodiments provide that the R_h, D_h, C_h circuit is connected between the DC power line and the ground or neutral. In some embodiments, the anode of the holding diode D_h is connected to the DC power line and the cathode of the holding diode D_h is connected to the holding capacitor C_h, the other terminal of which is connected to the ground or neutral.

[0133] The power supply and voltage hold-up circuit **166** may include multiple different DC-DC isolated converters **186**. For example, in the context of a three phase system, a DC-DC isolated converter **186-1** may be provided to supply voltage (V_s, S) to a common driver in each of the three different thyristor trigger circuits **168-1, 2, 3**. Additionally, three DC-DC isolated converters **186-2, 3, 4** may be provided to supply voltage (V_{s1}, S₁; V_{s2}, S₂; V_{s3}, S₃) to respective ones of the thyristor trigger circuits **168-1, 2, 3**, respectively.

[0134] Brief reference is now made to FIG. 8, which is a block diagram illustrating a DC-DC isolated converter as discussed in reference to FIG. 7 above. A DC-DC isolated converter **186** may receive an input DC voltage V_{in} to an inverter **191**, which is configured to convert the DC input voltage to an AC voltage. The AC voltage may be provided to an isolation transformer **192**, which may produce a corresponding AC output that is conductively isolated from the input AC voltage that is received from the inverter **191**. In some embodiments, the isolation transformer **192** may include a coil winding ratio that is 1:1 such that the AC output voltage is at a same voltage level as the AC input voltage received by the isolation transformer. Some embodiments provide that the isolation transformer **192** coil winding ratio is not 1.0 and thus the AC output voltage may have a different voltage level from the AC input voltage received by the isolation transformer **192**. The AC output voltage from the isolation transformer **192** may be received by a rectifier **193**, which is configured to convert the AC voltage to a DC output voltage.

[0135] Referring back to FIG. 6, in some embodiments, the trigger circuit **106** may include an interface circuit **164** that is configured to receive inputs from various sensors and provide the data corresponding to the received inputs to a microcontroller **162**. For example, the interface circuit **164** may receive inputs corresponding to: the voltages of the phase power lines L₁, L₂, L₃ and the neutral N; an arc flash alarm signal AFD from the arc flash detection system **64**; current flow on the phase power lines **11, 12, 13**; current flow through the SPD's I_{s1}, I_{s2}, I_{s3}; and/or temperature of the SPDs T_{s1}, T_{s2}, T_{s3}, among others.

[0136] Some embodiments provide that the microcontroller **162** may process the received inputs and generate trigger signals to one or more thyristor triggers **168-1, 2, 3** to trigger the thyristors to a conduction mode. In some embodiments, the microcontroller may further generate a trip signal TCB to the main circuit breaker **68**. Some embodiments provide that the microcontroller generates an alarm signal that may be provided to local and/or remote locations that may be monitored and/or that may include supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA). In some embodiments, the alarm signal is provided to a remote visual and/or audible annunciator.

[0137] The microcontroller **162** may trigger the thyristors based on a variety of causes and/or

events. For example, an arc flash may trigger an arc flash signal to be sent to the microcontroller **162** from the arc flash detection system **64**. A system overvoltage condition corresponding one or more lines having a voltage that exceeds a predetermined threshold for a predetermined period of time may cause the microcontroller to trigger the thyristors. An overcurrent condition on one or more lines in which the current exceeds a predetermined current threshold for a predetermined period of time may cause the microcontroller to trigger the thyristors.

[0138] In some embodiments, overheating of the surge protection devices **104** in which a temperature of the SPDs exceeds a predetermined temperature threshold for a predetermined period of time may cause the microcontroller to trigger the thyristors. Additionally a short circuit may be detected when a voltage drop of any phase line and a corresponding current increase of that phase line may cause the microcontroller to trigger the thyristors.

[0139] Some embodiments provide that a detected end of life of an SPD may cause the microcontroller to trigger the thyristors. In some embodiments, such an SPD may include a metal oxide varistor (MOV) and/or combined MOV/GDT (gas discharge tube). Such a condition may be determined by a voltage drop in a phase line and a current rise in the corresponding SPD.

[0140] In some embodiments, the microcontroller may be configured to trigger the overvoltage protection device only when specific combinations of conditions and/or events are occurring with or without any constraints on the time interval between the conditions and/or events.

[0141] In some embodiments the thyristor triggers **168-1, 2, 3** may receive a trigger signal from the microcontroller **162** and provide control signals to corresponding thyristor pairs to cause the respective thyristors to switch from a substantially non-conducting state to a conducting state. For example, brief reference is now made to FIG. **9**, which is a schematic block diagram illustrating a thyristor trigger circuit **168-1** as discussed above in reference to FIG. **6**.

[0142] Each of the thyristor trigger circuits **168** may be the same and may be operable to trigger a pair of thyristors that correspond to a specific phase line. As such, FIG. **9** is directed to one of the thyristor circuits of FIG. **6**, namely **168-1**, which corresponds to the thyristors connected to phase line **L1**. The common driver **172** may be powered by voltage lines **Vs** and **S** that are provided from the power supply and voltage hold-up circuit **166** and that are provided to the common driver **172** of each of the other thyristor trigger circuits **168-2, 3**. The common driver **172** changes state to provide a thyristor trigger signal **TH1** responsive to trigger signal **T1** from the microcontroller **162**. Thyristor **1** changes to a conducting state responsive to the state change of **TH1** and remains in a conducting state as long as **TH1** is activated. In the case of thyristor **1**, the reference point **C1** is the neutral line **N**.

[0143] The opto driver **170** may be powered by voltage lines **Vs1** and **S1** that are provided from the power supply and voltage hold-up circuit **166**. In contrast with the DC voltage circuit **Vs** and **S**, the voltage lines **Vs1** and **S1** are not provided to other ones of the thyristor circuits **168-2, 3**. The opto driver **170** changes state to provide a thyristor trigger signal **TH2** responsive to trigger signal **T2** from the microcontroller **162**. Thyristor **2** changes to a conducting state responsive to the state change of **TH2** and remains in a conducting state as long as **TH2** is activated. In the case of thyristor **2**, the reference point **C2** is the phase line **L1**. The phase voltage reference point is a reason for using an opto driver to isolate the output.

[0144] Referring back to FIG. **6**, the trigger circuit triggers all 6 of the thyristors at the same time and maintains the triggered state for at least 100 milliseconds while at the same time the power is supplied to the trigger circuit via the power supply and voltage hold-up circuit **166**. Additionally, while the thyristors are being triggered, the trigger circuit may provide a trigger signal to the main circuit breaker **68** and an alarm indicating the fault. In some embodiments, the alarm may also include data corresponding to a cause of the fault event.

[0145] Brief reference is now made to FIG. **10**, which is a schematic diagram representing a circuit including an arc flash, overvoltage, overcurrent and surge protection system in a three phase switchgear cabinet according to some other embodiments of the present invention. As illustrated,

embodiments according to FIG. **10** differ from those described above regarding FIG. **5** in that the crowbar device **102** includes a bidirectional thyristor for each phase to neutral instead of two unidirectional thyristors in a complementary arrangement for each phase. Some embodiments provide that the bidirectional thyristors each rely on four control wires for providing a trigger signal thereto. Other features of FIG. **10** are substantially similar to those discussed above regarding FIG. **5** and thus will not be repeated.

[0146] Reference is now made to FIG. **11**, which is a schematic diagram representing a circuit including an arc flash, overvoltage, overcurrent and surge protection system in a three phase switchgear cabinet according to some other embodiments of the present invention. As illustrated, embodiments according to FIG. **11** differ from those described above regarding FIG. **5** in that the crowbar device **102** includes the thyristors and the SPDs **104**. In some embodiments, ones of the SPDs **104** are connected in the crowbar device **102** in parallel with the thyristor, RC and/or RLC circuits that are connected from each phase to the neutral. Some embodiments provide that the SPDs **104** are metal oxide varistors (MOVs) and/or combined MOV/GDT. In some embodiments, the MOVs may be thermally fused to prevent overheating of the MOV in the case of increased leakage currents, which may be a typical occurrence when an overvoltage condition exists in the power system. In this regard, the trigger circuit **106** may monitor the temperature rise and/or the thermal fuse and/or current through the MOV to indicate if the MOV has failed to short.

Responsive to such conditions, the thyristors may be quickly triggered to prevent further damage of the whole device. Some embodiments provide that the thermal fuse may be sufficient to interrupt leakage currents when the MOV has not failed to short, to prevent overheating of the device. Other features of FIG. **10** are substantially similar to those discussed above regarding FIG. **5** and thus will not be repeated. To further reduce the overvoltage that could be applied to the thyristors, additional MOVs could be used in parallel to the snubber circuit (RC).

[0147] Reference is now made to FIG. **12**, which is a schematic diagram representing a circuit including an arc flash, overvoltage, overcurrent and surge protection system in a three phase switchgear cabinet according to some other embodiments of the present invention. As illustrated, embodiments according to FIG. **12** differ from those described above regarding FIG. **5** in that the crowbar device **102** is configured to be connected from phase to phase instead of phase to neutral. Specifically, a thyristor and an RLC circuit is connected from each phase to another phase such that the crowbar device **102** may operate without conducting excess current to a neutral line N.

Additionally, the SPDs **104** are connected from phase to phase to provide overvoltage protection for one phase relative to the other phases. In some embodiments, the crowbar device **100** include a single thyristor that may be a single directional thyristor. Other features of FIG. **10** are substantially similar to those discussed above regarding FIG. **5** and thus will not be repeated.

[0148] As used herein, “monolithic” means an object that is a single, unitary piece formed or composed of a material without joints or seams.

[0149] With reference to FIGS. **13-23**, a crowbar system **200** and a connector module **290** according to embodiments of the invention are shown therein. The crowbar system **200** corresponds to and is an implementation of the crowbar system **102** of FIG. **5**. The connector module **290** corresponds to and is an implementation of a connector that may be connected between the crowbar system **102** and the trigger circuit **106** as illustrated in FIG. **3**.

[0150] With reference to FIG. **13**, the system **200** includes three line conductors L1B, L2B, and L3B (electrically connected to the lines L1, L2 and L3, respectively, of FIG. **5**), a neutral conductor NB (electrically connected to the neutral line N of FIG. **5**), and three crowbar modules **210(1)**, **210(2)**, and **210(3)** according to embodiments of the invention and each corresponding to a respective one of the modules **120** of FIG. **3**. The conductors L1B, L2B, L3B, NB may be substantially rigid, metal plates or busbars, for example. The conductors L1B, L2B, L3B, NB may be mounted in an electrical switchgear cabinet **60**, for example. The crowbar modules **210(1)**, **210(2)**, and **210(3)** are electrically connected to the connector module **290**. Each of the crowbar

modules **210(1)**, **210(2)**, and **210(3)** electrically and mechanically connects the neutral conductor NB with a respective one of the line conductors L1B, L2B, L3B.

[0151] In some embodiments, the conductors L1B, L2B, L3B, NB are rigid busbars and are rigidly affixed to and connected by the modules **210(1)**, **210(2)**, **210(3)** to collectively form a substantially rigid, unitary assembly or device **203** (FIG. 13).

[0152] With reference to FIGS. 14-21, the crowbar module **210(3)** is shown therein. The crowbar modules **210(1)**, **210(2)**, and **210(3)** may be substantially identical in construction and therefore only the crowbar module **210(3)** will be described in detail below, it being understood that this description likewise applies to the other crowbar modules **210(1)**, **210(2)**. Herein, the numeral **210** is used to describe each of the three crowbar modules **210(1)**, **210(2)**, **210(3)** generally.

[0153] The module **210(3)** includes a plastic cover **212**, a metal base busbar **214**, fasteners **215**, a coil assembly **220**, an internal circuit board assembly **230**, a signal cable **232**, and two thyristor assemblies or units **201**, **202**.

[0154] Each of the thyristor units **201** and **202** includes a thyristor **270**. The thyristor **270** of the unit **201** corresponds to the thyristor TH6 of FIG. 5 and the thyristor **270** of the unit **202** corresponds to the thyristor TH5.

[0155] A center through hole **214B** and outer through holes **214A** are defined in the busbar **214** (FIG. 16). The holes **214A** may be countersunk or recessed to fully receive the heads of bolts **217**. According to some embodiments, the busbar **214** is formed of aluminum. According to some embodiments, the busbar **214** is unitary and, in some embodiments, monolithic.

[0156] The cover **212** and the busbar **214** form a module housing that defines an enclosed cavity **212A** within which the coil assembly **220**, the internal circuit board assembly **230**, the signal cable **232**, and the crowbar units **201**, **202** are contained. The signal cable **232** extends out of the cover **212** through a hole **212B** and to the connection module **290**.

[0157] The cover **212** may be formed of a dielectric or electrically insulating material having high melting and combustion temperatures. In some embodiments, the cover **212** is formed of a material that provides good moisture resistance. In some embodiments, the cover **212** is formed of a polymeric material and, in some embodiments, a silicone compound or polybutylene terephthalate (PBT).

[0158] A filler material **218** (FIG. 14) fills the volume within the cavity not occupied by the components **220**, **230**, **232**, **201**, **202**. The filler material **218** may be a dielectric or electrically insulating material having high melting and combustion temperatures. In some embodiments, the filler material is formed of a polymeric material and, in some embodiments, includes a material selected from the group consisting of epoxy cast resin.

[0159] The coil assembly **220** (FIGS. 14 and 16-18) includes an electrically conductive coil member **222**, an electrically conductive busbar **224**, an electrically conductive terminal member **226**, an electrical insulator sheet **227**, an electrically insulating casing **228**, coupling screws **229A** and coupling bolts **229B**.

[0160] The coil member **220** corresponds to the coil L (FIG. 5). The coil member **220** includes a coil body **222A**, a spirally extending coil strip **222C** defining a spiral coil channel **222B**, and a coupling extension **222D**. Threaded bores **222E** extend axially through the extension **222D** and through holes **222F** extend axially through the body **222A**.

[0161] According to some embodiments, the coil member **220** is formed of metal and, in some embodiments, is formed of aluminum. According to some embodiments, the coil member **220** is unitary and, in some embodiments, monolithic.

[0162] The terminal member **226** includes a body **226A**, a coupling extension **226B**, and a terminal post **226C**. Holes **226E** extend axially through the extension **226B**. A threaded bore **226D** extends axially into the post **226C**. The terminal member **226** is electrically and mechanically connected to the coil member **220** by the bolts **229B**, which extend through the bores **222E**, **226E**. The insulator sheet **227** is interposed between the body **226A** and the body **222A** to prevent or inhibit direct flow

of electrical current therebetween.

[0163] According to some embodiments, the terminal member **226** is formed of metal and, in some embodiments, is formed of aluminum. According to some embodiments, the terminal member **226** is unitary and, in some embodiments, monolithic.

[0164] The busbar **224** includes a body **224A** that is substantially planar on its upper side and has standoffs **224B** projecting from its lower side. Bolt holes **224C** extend axially through the body **224A** and the standoffs **224B**. Fasteners **229A** extend through holes **224D** and into the coil body **222A** to secure the upper face of the busbar **224** in mechanical and electrical contact with the coil body **222A**.

[0165] According to some embodiments, the busbar **224** is formed of metal and, in some embodiments, is formed of aluminum. According to some embodiments, the busbar **224** is unitary and, in some embodiments, monolithic.

[0166] The casing **228** includes an outer shell portion **228A** and a separator wall portion **228B**. The outer shell portion **228A** partially surrounds and encases the components **222**, **224**, **226**, **227**. Bolt holes **228C** are defined in the portion **228A** in alignment with the holes **222F**. The terminal post **226C** projects through a post hole **228D** and above the casing **228**. The separator wall portion **228B** fills the coil channel **222B** between the adjacent windings of the coil strip **222C**.

[0167] The casing **228** may be formed of a dielectric or electrically insulating material having high melting and combustion temperatures. In some embodiments, the casing **228** is formed of a polymeric material. In some embodiments, the casing **228** includes an epoxy. In some embodiments, the casing **228** includes a material selected from the group consisting of epoxy adhesive and/or epoxy cast resin or silicone elastomer. In some embodiments, the casing **228** is monolithic. In some embodiments, the casing **228** includes a material selected from the group consisting of epoxy adhesive and/or epoxy cast resin that is itself covered by an outer layer of a different material.

[0168] The outer casing layer **223** may be formed of a different material than the casing **228** in order to provide complementary properties. In some embodiments, the outer casing layer **223** is formed of a material that provides enhanced moisture resistance as compared to the material of the casing **228**. In some embodiments, the outer casing layer **223** is formed of a silicone compound or PBT. The O-rings **223A** (made of the same or similar material as the O-rings **265A**, **265B**) prevent leakage of the epoxy used in liquid form (initially) to form the casing **228**.

[0169] The circuit board assembly **230** includes a substrate **230A** (e.g., a PCB) and a capacitor **230B**, a pair of resistors **230C**, **230D**, a lead wire **230E**, and a lead bracket **230F** mounted thereon. The capacitor **230B** corresponds to the capacitor C (FIG. 5). The resistors **230C**, **230D** correspond to the resistor(s) R (FIG. 5). The capacitor **230B** is electrically connected to the busbar **224** by the wire **230E** and the resistors **230C**, **230D** is electrically connected to the busbar **214** by the lead bracket **230F**. The resistors **230C**, **230D** and the capacitor form a snubber circuit as discussed in more detail below.

[0170] With reference to FIGS. **16** and **19-21**, the crowbar unit **201** is shown therein. The crowbar units **201**, **202** may be substantially identical in construction and therefore only the crowbar unit **201** will be described in detail below, it being understood that this description likewise applies to the crowbar unit **202**.

[0171] The crowbar unit **201** has a lengthwise axis A-A (FIG. **20**). The crowbar unit **201** includes a first electrode or housing **240**, a piston-shaped second electrode **250**, a thyristor **270** between the housing **240** and the electrode **250**, and other components as discussed in more detail below.

[0172] With reference to FIGS. **19** and **20**, the housing **240** has an end electrode wall **242** and a cylindrical sidewall **244** extending from the electrode wall **242**. The sidewall **244** and the electrode wall **242** form a chamber or cavity **241** communicating with an opening **246**. A threaded bore **249** extends axially into the electrode wall **242**. A wire aperture or port **248** extends through the side wall **244** and has an enlarged recess **248A** at its outer opening.

[0173] The electrode **250** has a head **252** disposed in the cavity **241** and an integral shaft **254** that projects outwardly through the opening **246**. The thyristor **270** is disposed in the cavity **241** between and in contact with each of the electrode wall **242** and the head **252**.

[0174] Turning to the construction of the crowbar unit **201** in greater detail, the crowbar unit **201** further includes spring washers **262**, flat washers **264**, an insulating member **266**, an end cap **268**, a retention clip **267**, O-rings **265A**, **265B**, and a cable gland **280**.

[0175] The electrode wall **242** of the housing **240** has an inwardly facing, substantially planar contact surface **242A**. A locator feature or post **247** projects upwardly from the contact surface **242A**. An annular slot **243** is formed in the inner surface of the sidewall **244**. According to some embodiments, the housing **240** is formed of aluminum. However, any suitable electrically conductive metal may be used. According to some embodiments, the housing **240** is unitary and, in some embodiments, monolithic. The housing **240** as illustrated is cylindrically shaped, but may be shaped differently.

[0176] As best seen in FIG. **20**, the head **252** of the electrode **250** has a substantially planar contact surface **252A** that faces the contact surface **242A** of the electrode wall **242**. A threaded bore **255** is formed in the end of the shaft **254** to receive the bolt **215** for securing the busbar L3B to the electrode **250**. An annular, sidewardly opening groove **254D** is defined in the shaft **254**.

[0177] According to some embodiments, the electrode **250** is formed of aluminum and, in some embodiments, the housing sidewall **244** and the electrode **250** are both formed of aluminum. However, any suitable electrically conductive metal may be used. According to some embodiments, the electrode **250** is unitary and, in some embodiments, monolithic.

[0178] An annular gap **G1** is defined radially between the head **252** and the nearest adjacent surface of the sidewall **244**. According to some embodiments, the gap **G1** has a radial width in the range of from about 5 to 15 mm.

[0179] The housing **240**, the insulating member **266** and the end cap **268** collectively define an enclosed chamber **245** containing the thyristor **270**.

[0180] The thyristor **270** includes a body **272** and an anode **274** and a cathode **276** on axially opposed ends of the body **272**. It will be appreciated that in FIG. **14** the internal structure and components of the thyristors are not shown in detail. The anode **274** and cathode **276** have substantially planar contact surfaces **274A** and **276A**, respectively. The thyristor **270** is interposed between the contact surfaces **242A** and **252A** such that the contact surface **274A** mates with the contact surface **242A** and the contact surface **276A** mates with the contact surface **252A**. As described below, the head **252** and the wall **242** are mechanically loaded against the thyristor **270** to ensure firm and uniform engagement between the mating contact surfaces. The locator post **247** of the housing **240** is seated in a complementary locator socket **277** formed in the contact surface **276A**.

[0181] The thyristor **270** further includes a gate or control terminal **278A** and a reference terminal **278B**. For example, as illustrated in FIG. **5**, an input to the gate or control terminal **278A** of the thyristor labeled therein as TH5 may correspond to signal TH5 from the trigger circuit **106**. Similarly, a reference connection to a reference terminal **278B** of the thyristor TH5 may correspond to the reference C5 from the trigger circuit **106**.

[0182] With reference to FIG. **20**, the cable gland **280** is affixed in the wire port **248** and two signal wires **232A**, **232B** extend through the wire port **248** and the cable gland **280** and into the chamber **245**. The wire **232A** is electrically terminated at the control terminal **278A** and the wire **232B** is electrically terminated at the reference terminal **278B**.

[0183] The cable gland **280** includes a fitting **282** that is secured in the wire port **248**. The fitting **282** has a cylindrical body **282A**, a flange **282B** and a through bore **282C**. The body **282A** is seated in the wire port **248** and the flange **282B** is seated in the recess **248A**. The fitting **282** may be secured in place by adhesive **284**, for example. In some embodiments, the adhesive **284** bonds the body **282A** and the flange **282B** directly to the wall of the wire port **248**.

[0184] The cable gland **280** further includes a sealing plug **286** in the bore **282C**. The sealing plug **286** surrounds the wires **232A**, **232B**, bonds to the wires **232A**, **232B** and the fitting **282**, and continuously fills the radial space between the wires **232A**, **232B** and the fitting **282** and seals about the wires **232A**, **232B**. In this manner, the sealing plug **286** serves to mechanically retain or secure the wires **232A**, **232B** in the port **282C** (providing strain relief) and to fully seal, plug or close the bore **282C** (e.g., hermetically).

[0185] The sealing plug **286** may be formed of a rigid material having high melting and combustion temperatures. In some embodiments, the sealing plug **286** is formed of a polymeric material. In some embodiments, the sealing plug **286** is a hardened or cured resin. In some embodiments, the sealing plug **286** includes an epoxy. In some embodiments, the scaling plug **286** includes an epoxy adhesive or an epoxy cast resin.

[0186] The fitting **282** may be formed of a rigid material having high melting and combustion temperatures. In some embodiments, the fitting **282** is formed of a polymeric material. In some embodiments, the fitting **282** is formed of Nylon-66 (PA-66), or equivalent.

[0187] A cable gland **280** can also be provided for scaling and penetration of the cable **232** through the cover **212** (FIG. 15).

[0188] The spring washers **262** surround the shaft **254**. Each spring washer **262** includes a hole that receives the shaft **254**. The lowermost spring washer **262** abuts the top face of the head **252**. According to some embodiments, the clearance between the spring washer hole and the shaft **254** is in the range of from about 0.015 to 0.035 inch. The spring washers **262** may be formed of a resilient material. According to some embodiments and as illustrated, the spring washers **262** are Belleville washers formed of spring steel. While two spring washers **262** are shown, more or fewer may be used. The springs may be provided in a different stack arrangement such as in series, parallel, or series and parallel.

[0189] The flat metal washers **264** are interposed between the spring washer **262** and the insulator ring **266** with the shaft **254** extending through holes formed in the washers **264**. The washers **264** serve to distribute the mechanical load of the upper spring washer **262** to prevent the spring washer **262** from cutting into the insulator ring **266**.

[0190] The insulator ring **266** overlies and abuts the washer **264**. The insulator ring **266** has a main body ring **266A** and a cylindrical upper flange or collar **266B** extending upwardly from the main body ring **266A**. A hole **266C** receives the shaft **254**. According to some embodiments, the clearance between the hole **266C** and the shaft **254** is in range of from about 0.025 to 0.065 inch. An upwardly and outwardly opening peripheral groove **266D** is formed in the top corner of the main body ring **266A**.

[0191] The insulator ring **266** is preferably formed of a dielectric or electrically insulating material having high melting and combustion temperatures. The insulator ring **266** may be formed of polycarbonate, ceramic or a high temperature polymer, for example.

[0192] The end cap **268** overlies and abuts the insulator ring **266**. The end cap **268** has a hole **268A** that receives the shaft **254**. According to some embodiments, the clearance between the hole **268A** and the shaft **254** is in the range of from about 0.1 to 0.2 inch. The end cap **268** may be formed of aluminum, for example.

[0193] The clip **267** is resilient and truncated ring shaped. The clip **267** is partly received in the slot **243** and partly extends radially inwardly from the inner wall of the housing **240** to limit outward axial displacement of the end cap **268**. The clip **267** may be formed of spring steel.

[0194] The O-ring **265A** is positioned in the groove **254** so that it is captured between the shaft **254** and the insulator ring **266**. The O-ring **265B** is positioned in the groove **266D** such that it is captured between the insulating member **266** and the sidewall **244**. When installed, the O-rings **265A**, **265B** are compressed so that they are biased against and form a seal between the adjacent interfacing surfaces. In an overvoltage event, byproducts such as hot gases and fragments from the thyristor **270** may fill or scatter into the cavity chamber **245**. These byproducts may be constrained

or prevented by the O-rings **265A**, **265B** from escaping the crowbar unit **201** through the housing opening **246**.

[0195] The O-rings **265A**, **265B** may be formed of the same or different materials. According to some embodiments, the O-rings **265A**, **265B** are formed of a resilient material, such as an elastomer. According to some embodiments, the O-rings **265A**, **265B** are formed of rubber. The O-rings **265A**, **265B** may be formed of a fluorocarbon rubber such as VITON™ available from DuPont. Other rubbers such as butyl rubber may also be used. According to some embodiments, the rubber has a durometer of between about 60 and 100 Shore A.

[0196] The electrode head **252** and the housing wall **242** are persistently biased or loaded against the thyristor **270** along a load or clamping axis C-C (FIG. **20**) to ensure firm and uniform engagement between the thyristor contact surfaces **276A**, **274A** and the surfaces **242A**, **252A**. This aspect of the unit **201** may be appreciated by considering a method according to the present invention for assembling the unit **201**, as described below.

[0197] The wires **232A**, **232B** are secured in the bore **282A** of the fitting **282** using the sealing plug **286**. In some embodiments, the wires **278A**, **278B** are inserted into the bore **282A**, a liquid sealing material is introduced (e.g., poured or injected) into the bore about the wires **232A**, **232B**, and the sealing material is cured to form the rigid sealing plug **286** on the wires **232A**, **232B**.

[0198] The fitting **282** is secured in the wire port **248** using the adhesive **284**. The wires **232A**, **232B** are connected to the terminals **274A**, **276A**. In some embodiments, the wires **232A**, **232B** are secured by the sealing plug **286** before the step of securing the fitting **282** in the wire port **248**.

[0199] The O-rings **265A**, **265B** are installed in the grooves **254**, **266D**. The thyristor **270** is placed in the cavity **241** such that the contact surface **276A** engages the contact surface **242A**. The electrode **250** is inserted into the cavity **241** such that the contact surface **252A** engages the contact surface **274A**. The spring washers **262** are slid down the shaft **254**. The washers **264**, the insulator ring **266**, and the end cap **268** are slid down the shaft **254** and over the spring washers **262**. A jig (not shown) or other suitable device is used to force the end cap **268** down, in turn deflecting the spring washers **262**. While the end cap **268** is still under the load of the jig, the clip **267** is compressed and inserted into the slot **243**. The clip **267** is then released and allowed to return to its original diameter, whereupon it partly fills the slot and partly extends radially inward into the cavity **241** from the slot **243**. The clip **267** and the slot **243** thereby serve to maintain the load on the end cap **268** to partially deflect the spring washers **262**. The loading of the end cap **268** onto the insulator ring **266** and from the insulator ring onto the spring washers **262** is in turn transferred to the head **252**. In this way, the thyristor **270** is sandwiched (clamped) between the head **252** and the electrode wall **242**.

[0200] When the crowbar unit **201** is assembled, the housing **240**, the electrode **250**, the insulating member **266**, the end cap **268**, the clip **267**, the O-rings **265A**, **265B** and the cable gland **280** collectively form a unit housing or housing assembly **249** containing the thyristor **270**.

[0201] The crowbar module **210** may be assembled as follows in accordance with methods of the invention.

[0202] In order to construct the coil assembly **220**, the busbar **224** is secured to the coil member **222** using the bolts **229A**. The terminal member **226** is secured to the coil member **222** using the bolts **229B** with the insulator sheet **227** captured between the terminal member **226** and the coil member **222**. The casing **228** is thereafter molded about and through this subassembly. For example, in some embodiments, the subassembly is placed in a mold, the mold is then filled with liquid casing material (e.g., a liquid resin), and the material is then cooled or cured to form the rigid casing **228**. The regions of the holes **228C**, **228D**, **222F**, **226D** may be temporarily filled or plugged with mold features or the like to prevent the liquid casing material from filling these regions. The casing **223** is molding or fitted about the casing **228**. For example, the casing **223** may be molded or co-molded around the casing **228**. Elastomeric O-rings **223A** may be fitted about the terminal post **226C** and the busbar standoffs **224B**.

[0203] The coil assembly **220** is secured to the electrode **240** of the crowbar unit **201** by a bolt **217** and to the electrode **250** of the crowbar unit **202** by a bolt **217**. The heads of the bolts **217** are seated in the holes **228C** of the casing **228** to provide a low, flat profile. The base busbar **214** is secured to the electrode **250** of the crowbar unit **201** by a bolt **217** and to the electrode **240** of the crowbar unit **201** by a bolt **217**. The heads of the bolts **217** are seated in the holes **214A** of the base busbar **214** to provide a low, flat profile. The lead wires **230E** and **230F** are secured to the busbar **224** and the base busbar **214**, respectively, by screws.

[0204] The cover **212** is installed over the foregoing subassembly and secured to the base busbar **214** by fasteners (e.g., screws), adhesive, and/or interlock features, for example. The cable **232** (which includes the wire pairs **232A**, **232B** from each of the crowbar units **201**, **202**) is routed through the opening **212B** in the cover **212**. The remaining volume of the cavity **212A** is filled with the filler material **218**. In some embodiments, a liquid filler material is introduced (e.g., poured or injected through the hole **214B**) into the cavity **212A**, and then cured to form the rigid filler material **218**.

[0205] The connection module **290** (FIGS. **13** and **22**) includes a circuit or circuits corresponding to an interconnection between the crowbar system **102** and the trigger circuit **106**. For example, some embodiments provide that the crowbar system **102** includes three crowbar modules **210(1)**, **210(2)** and **210(3)** (schematically illustrated as crowbar module **120** in FIG. **5**) that include connections to trigger circuit **106**. Specifically, for example, each of cables **232** may correspond to a respective one of the crowbar modules **210** and may correspond to thyristor trigger signals for each of the two crowbar units **201** within each crowbar module **210** and reference signals for each of the two crowbar units within each crowbar module **210**. The connection module **290** may include a surrounding enclosure **292**, and multiple electrical contacts that are configured to provide connections to contacts in a mating connector (not shown). In this manner, the crowbar system **102** may be connected to the trigger circuit **106**.

[0206] In order to connect the crowbar modules **210(1)**, **210(2)**, **210(3)** to the conductors **L1B**, **L2B**, **L3B**, **NB**, each of the line conductors **L1B**, **L2B**, **L3B** is mechanically and electrically connected to the terminal member **226** of a respective one of the crowbar modules **210(1)**, **210(2)**, **210(3)** by a bolt **215**, and the neutral conductor **NB** is mechanically and electrically connected to the base busbars **214** of the crowbar modules **210(1)**, **210(2)**, **210(3)** by bolts **215**.

[0207] In use, the crowbar system **200** and the crowbar modules **210(1)**, **210(2)**, **210(3)** perform as described above for the system **102** and the three modules **120**, respectively (FIG. **5**).

[0208] When a triggering event occurs, and the thyristors **270** of a module **210** conduct current between the lines the module **210** bridges (i.e., the neutral line **N** and the associated one of the lines **L1**, **L2**, **L3**). As discussed above, the crowbar units **201**, **202**, and therefore the thyristors **270** thereof, are oriented in opposite directions in order to conduct current in respective ones of the AC current directions. In the case of the crowbar unit **202** of the module **210**, the current flows sequentially through the terminal post **226C**, the terminal extension **226B**, the coil member extension **222D**, the coil strip **222C**, the coil body **222A**, the busbar **224**, the electrode **250** mated to the busbar **224**, the thyristor **270**, the electrode **240** mated to the busbar **214**, and the busbar **214**. In the case of the crowbar unit **201**, the current flows sequentially through the busbar **214**, the electrode **250**, the thyristor **270**, the electrode **240**, the busbar **224**, the coil body **222A**, the coil strip **222C**, the extension **222D**, the extension **226B**, and the terminal post **226C**.

[0209] The construction and configuration of the crowbar modules **210** provides a compact, modular, unitarily packaged device that can be efficiently integrated into existing electrical equipment cabinets. The packaging provides a simple and convenient arrangement and features for connecting the modules **210** to the lines **L1**, **L2**, **L3**, **N** (e.g., via conductor busbars **L1B**, **L2B**, **L3B**, **NB**).

[0210] Moreover, the construction and configuration of the crowbar modules **210** can provide the crowbar modules **210** with increased strength and durability to withstand the physical effect

(electromagnetic forces generated) of fault currents over a prolonged period of time, and other electrical and mechanical stresses in service. Therefore, it can safely withstand the short circuit event (avoid any safety issues to the personnel and any damages to the equipment of the installation as well as the whole installation itself) when it is triggered.

[0211] The crowbar module **210** can operate when triggered in two distinct ways: one to withstand the fault current for the period of time required to trip the upstream main circuit breaker and a second (a different design than the first) that the thyristors **270** cannot withstand the fault current and fail in short. The second option is attractive due to the lower energy withstand capabilities of the thyristors employed in the design. However, in such case, the crowbar system **200** typically can only be triggered once, as after it is triggered, the system **200** is not recoverable and it has to be replaced. In the case where the thyristors **270** can withstand the fault current, two additional provisions are typically required. One is that the inductance of the added coil **222** is used to eliminate the possibility of damaging the thyristors due to high di/dt during the conduction of the fault currents (creates a hot spot on the internal surface of the thyristor disk). The impedance of the coil is also useful to allow the snubber circuit **230B**, **230C**, **230D** to prevent thyristor self-trigger due to excessive dv/dt (reduce the dV/dt, that requires a certain impedance in the circuit—in some applications this could be part of the existing impedance of the system and allow the omission of the coil). The second is that even in this case there should be provisions using the same construction for the crowbar module **210** to withstand the damage in case the thyristor fails short—typical failure mode of the thyristor. Therefore the configuration of the crowbar module **210** is highly beneficial, and in some cases mandatory, for both design implementations (withstand and failure of the crowbar module **210**).

[0212] For example, when a module **210** is activated, a thyristor **270** thereof may be damaged (e.g., as a result of carrying all of the fault current). However, the associated housing assembly **241** contains the damage (e.g., debris, gases and immediate heat) within the crowbar unit **201**, **202**, so that the module **210** fails safely. Moreover, the components of the module **210** surrounding the unit **201**, **202** can also contain any or buffer any heat or damage products that escape the unit **201**, **202**. In this way, the module **210** can prevent or reduce any damage to adjacent equipment (e.g., switch gear equipment in the cabinet) and harm to personnel. In this manner, the module **210** can enhance the safety of equipment and personnel. This can be a very important feature as the main reason for using a crowbar system as discussed herein is the protection of equipment and personnel from arc flash hazards that are typically caused by breaking the insulation between bus bars or by failures on semiconductive devices (like thyristors, IGBTs, etc). So, such a system may be of limited or no significant value if it creates the same damaging effects that it is employed to solve (hazardous failure of semiconductive devices).

[0213] The construction of the coil assembly **220**, and in particular the casing **228**, provide a robust, unitary component. The enhanced strength of the coil assembly **220** is beneficial to withstand the stresses that may be experienced and exerted by the coil member **222**, which is located in series across lines.

[0214] The filler material **218** can provide the module **210** with improved strength. The filler material **218** can help to contain byproducts from destruction of the thyristor. The filler material **218** can thermal insulate as well as electrically insulate electrical components of the module **210** from the environment (e.g., personnel and other equipment in the switch cabinet). The filler material **218** can also provide tamper resistance.

[0215] The cable gland **280** provides strain relief for the wires **232A**, **232B**, and also serves to seal the wire port **248** to prevent or inhibit expulsion of byproducts from destruction of the thyristor through the wire port **248**.

[0216] In some embodiments, the cable gland **280** is constructed to permit breach or failure of the cable gland **248** in response to pressure in the chamber exceeding a threshold pressure in a prescribed range. That is, the cable gland **280** can serve as a pressure dependent valve. This may be

very important feature in case for some reason the crowbar module **210** is overexposed to fault currents—above its specifications—and the cable gland **280** operates as a pressure relief inside the module **210** without generating significant hazards (i.e., it is a controlled way to relieve the internal pressure by allowing a smoke emission in a specific direction that could be externally controlled by guiding the smoke emissions to a vent).

[0217] A failure of the cable gland **280** can be observed without disassembling the crowbar unit **201, 202**. The valve function the gland **280** can be advantageously employed to determine the maximum fault current and duration that the crowbar module **210** can withstand, having as an indication only when the valve will open when the crowbar unit **201, 202** is being tested or rated (used as a first indication that the fault current withstand capability of the crowbar module **210** is close to its limits, instead of experiencing a full damage of the whole module).

[0218] Electrical protection devices according to embodiments of the present invention (e.g., the device **210**) may provide a number of advantages in addition to those mentioned above. The devices may be formed so to have a relatively compact form factor. The devices may be retrofittable for installation in place of similar type crowbar devices not having a thyristor as described herein. In particular, the present devices may have the same length dimension, as such previous devices. That depends on the fault current rating of the crowbar system, the duration of the fault current and the mode of operation during trigger (withstand or failure). That determines the size of the thyristors **270** employed and therefore the size and construction details of the crowbar modules **210** and of the whole system.

[0219] According to some embodiments, the areas of engagement between each of the electrode contact surfaces (e.g., the contact surfaces **242A, 252A**) and the thyristor contact surfaces (e.g., the contact surfaces **274A, 276A**) is at least one square inch.

[0220] According to some embodiments, the biased electrodes **240, 250** apply a load to the thyristor **270** along the axis C-C in the range of from 2000 lbf and 26000 lbf depending on its surface area.

[0221] According to some embodiments, the combined thermal mass of the housing **240** and the electrode **250** is substantially greater than the thermal mass of the thyristor **270**. As used herein, the term “thermal mass” means the product of the specific heat of the material or materials of the object (e.g., the thyristor **270**) multiplied by the mass or masses of the material or materials of the object. That is, the thermal mass is the quantity of energy required to raise one gram of the material or materials of the object by one degree centigrade times the mass or masses of the material or materials in the object. According to some embodiments, the thermal mass of at least one of the electrode head **252** and the electrode wall **242** is substantially greater than the thermal mass of the thyristor **270**. According to some embodiments, the thermal mass of at least one of the electrode head **252** and the electrode wall **242** is at least two times the thermal mass of the thyristor **270**, and, according to some embodiments, at least ten times as great. According to some embodiments, the combined thermal masses of the head **252** and the wall **242** are substantially greater than the thermal mass of the thyristor **270**, according to some embodiments at least two times the thermal mass of the thyristor **270** and, according to some embodiments, at least ten times as great.

[0222] As discussed above, the spring washers **262** are Belleville washers. Belleville washers may be used to apply relatively high loading without requiring substantial axial space. However, other types of biasing means may be used in addition to or in place of the Belleville washer or washers. Suitable alternative biasing means include one or more coil springs, wave washers or spiral washers.

[0223] According to further embodiments of the invention, the crowbar module **210** may be constructed with only one crowbar unit **201** or **202** (i.e., the other crowbar unit **202** or **201** is omitted), so that the crowbar module so formed electrically conducts only in one direction. Such modified crowbar modules may be used in matched, inverted pairs to provide the functionality of the crowbar module **210**.

[0224] According to further embodiments of the invention, the crowbar module **210** may be constructed with only one crowbar unit **201** or **202** (i.e., the other crowbar unit **202** or **201** is omitted), but such that the remaining single crowbar unit **201**, **202** includes, in place of the thyristor **270**, a bi-directional thyristor that can operate in both directions. That is, when triggered, the bi-directional thyristor will conduct current in both directions of the AC current. This crowbar module may be reduced in size and/or cost as compared to the dual thyristor crowbar module.

[0225] According to further embodiments of the invention, the crowbar module **210** may be constructed without the coil **222**.

[0226] With reference to FIG. **23**, a crowbar module **310** according to further embodiments of the invention is shown therein. The crowbar module **310** corresponds to the crowbar module **210**, except as described below. In FIG. **23**, the cover **212**, the filler material **218**, and the crowbar unit **201** are not shown, in order to provide clearer view for the purpose of explanation. The crowbar unit **201** in the crowbar module **310** is electrically connected to the base busbar **214** and the coil member **222** by the bolts **217A** and **217B** as in the crowbar module **210**.

[0227] The crowbar module **310** includes an integral metal-oxide varistor (MOV) device **288**. The integrated MOV device **288** is electrically connected to the terminal member **226** by a lead **289A** (bypassing the coil **222C**), and to the base busbar **214** by a lead **289B**. The MOV device **288** is mounted on an electrically insulating substrate **288C** between the leads **289A**, **289B**. The MOV device **288** includes a first pin type lead electrically contacting the lead **289A** and a second pin type lead electrically contacting the lead **289B**. The MOV internally includes a thermal link (thermal disconnect or thermal fuse) between the lead **288A** and the one electrode of the MOV. The other electrode of the MOV is connected to lead **288B**. In addition, the connection between the **226** and the MOV lead **288A**, as well as the connection between the busbar **214** and the lead **288B**, is done using a bus bar to enable the connections to the power line and the ground to withstand the forces generated from the conducted current when the MOV conducts surge/lightning currents or fault currents from the power source. The crowbar module **310** may be used as a crowbar module in the crowbar device **102** of the system described above with reference to FIG. **11** for example. An additional MOV could also be used-integrated in the PCB **288C**-and connected in parallel to the two thyristors to reduce the overvoltage at their ends and to prevent the maximum expected overvoltage which could lead to the false trigger of the thyristor.

[0228] Reference is now made to FIG. **24**, which is a schematic diagram illustrating an arc flash, overvoltage, overcurrent and surge protection system according to some embodiments of the present invention. FIG. **24** may include elements that are described above regarding at least FIG. **5** and thus additional description thereof may be omitted. In some embodiments, the arc flash, overvoltage, overcurrent and surge protection system **500** may protect the electrical system of a wind turbine generator from arc flash, overcurrent and/or surge or lightning events. Some embodiments provide that arc flash, overvoltage, overcurrent and surge protection system **500** includes a crowbar device **502** that is operable to prevent an overvoltage condition by generating a low resistance path from the phase voltage lines **L1**, **L2**, **L3** to the neutral line **N**. Some embodiments provide that the crowbar device **502** includes crowbar modules **520** that are each connected between the corresponding phase voltage line **L1**, **L2**, **L3** and the neutral line **N**.

[0229] Some embodiments provide that each of the crowbar modules **520** maybe connected to a current sensor **505** that may monitor the current flow of the corresponding phase line. In some embodiments, the current sensor **505** may be separate from the crowbar module **520** and/or the crowbar device **502** while in some other embodiments the current sensor **505** may be integrated into the crowbar module **520** and/or the crowbar device **502**.

[0230] Some embodiments include surge protection devices (SPDs) **104**. As illustrated, each of the SPDs **104** may be connected between respective ones of **L1**, **L2** and **L3**, and neutral (**N**). The use of the SPD **104** may protect the thyristors of the crowbar device **502** during lightning events and/or transient overvoltage conditions, as well as protect other equipment in the installation.

[0231] In some embodiments, the crowbar device **502** may be triggered by an arc flash trigger circuit **506**. As described above, an arc flash detection system **64** may be configured to detect an arc flash within the switchgear cabinet **60** and provide an arc flash detection signal (AFD) to the arc flash trigger circuit **506**. In some embodiments, the arc flash trigger circuit **506** may manage trigger and alarm signals from the crowbar modules **520** and provide the trigger outputs to one or more circuit breakers **68**. Some embodiments provide that the arc flash trigger circuit **506** may also provide indications corresponding to the condition of each crowbar module **520** and a cause of triggering ones of the crowbar modules **520**.

[0232] The arc flash, overvoltage, overcurrent and surge protection system **500** may also include a threshold selector **510** that provides a signal to the arc flash trigger circuit **506** to set the current threshold at which the arc flash trigger circuit **506** causes the crowbar module **520** to actuate.

[0233] In use and function, under normal operating conditions, a crowbar module **520** may remain inactive and thus not conduct current between phase lines L1, L2, L3 and the neutral line N. Normal operating conditions may include those in which a phase line voltage is less than a specific threshold. For example, in some embodiments, the specific threshold may be about 1800 V peak, however, such embodiments are non-limiting as the threshold voltage may be more or less than 1800 V.

[0234] A crowbar module **520** may be triggered in different ways depending on when a fault condition is detected. For example, the crowbar module **520** may be triggered in a first manner during a start-up period and a second manner during steady state operation.

[0235] During a start-up period, such as within about 2 seconds or less from the start of a wind turbine or other generating device, the crowbar module **520** may operate without a power supply from the arc flash trigger circuit **506**. In this regard, the crowbar module **520** cannot be triggered by an alarm signal from the arc flash detection system **64** as such system is generally unavailable for operation during a start-up period. In this manner, the crowbar module **520** may be self triggered during the start-up period.

[0236] Reference is now made to FIG. 25, which is a schematic block diagram illustrating a crowbar module as briefly described above regarding FIG. 24, according to some embodiments of the present invention. The crowbar module **520** may include two thyristors TH1, TH2 that are connected anti-parallel to one another and in series with an inductor L. As used herein, the term “anti-parallel” may refer to a configuration in which components are connected in parallel with one another, but in a complementary arrangement relative to one another. For example, an anode terminal of a first component may be connected to a cathode terminal of a second component while the cathode terminal of the first component is connected to the anode terminal of the second component. In some embodiments, a resistor R and a capacitor C may be connected in series with one another and in parallel with the thyristors TH1, TH2. The crowbar module **520** may further include the crowbar trigger circuit **530** that is configured to provide a self triggering function within the crowbar module **520**. During a start-up period, the crowbar trigger circuit **530** may be powered by current received from the current sensor **505**. For example, the crowbar module **520** may be self triggered once the current through the phase line is above the threshold current ($I_{sub.TH}$) for a period of more than 2 ms. In such cases only the crowbar module **520** that is connected to the corresponding phase line may be triggered.

[0237] Brief reference is now made to FIG. 27, which is a graph illustrating voltage and current values during a fault condition according to some embodiments of the present invention.

Continuing with the example above, at time t_1 a fault current I reaches the threshold current $I_{sub.TH}$. At time t_2 , responsive to the fault current I exceeding the threshold current $I_{sub.TH}$ for a specific period of time, crowbar module **520** begins to conduct the fault current thus reducing the voltage for the remaining portion of that cycle at time t_3 to about zero volts. If the fault is still present during the second half of the cycle, then the crowbar module **520** again conducts the fault current thus reducing the voltage for the remaining portion that cycle.

[0238] Referring back to FIG. 25, some embodiments provide that every time the crowbar module 520 is triggered a trigger signal will be provided to the arc flash trigger circuit 506. In some embodiments, the response time of the crowbar module 520, from the time the overcurrent is detected, may be less than about 1 ms. In some embodiments, the response time may be less than about 500 μ s. Some embodiments provide that the response time may be about 300 μ s [0239] Reference is now made to FIG. 26, which is a schematic block diagram illustrating a crowbar trigger circuit of the crowbar module as briefly described above regarding FIG. 25, according to some embodiments of the present invention. The crowbar trigger circuit 530 may receive a current signal from current sensor 505 into one or more step up transformers 510, 512. Since the current signal and the output from the step up transformers 510, 512 may be an alternating current (AC) signal, the outputs from the step up transformers 510, 512 may be received by rectifiers 520, 522, respectively. The rectifiers 520, 522 may generate direct current (DC) signals that correspond to the current signal from the current sensor 505.

[0240] The crowbar trigger circuit 530 may also include variable reference signal generators 530, 532 which provide reference signals corresponding to the selected value of $I_{sub.TH}$. Comparators 540, 542 may be configured to receive the DC signals from the rectifiers 520, 522, respectively and reference signals from the variable reference generators 532, 530. Responsive to the one of DC signals from the rectifier exceeding the reference signal, the output state of the comparator changes from high to low, or vice versa. The crowbar trigger circuit 530 may include delay circuits 550, 552 that are configured to receive output signals from the comparators 540, 542. Responsive to receiving a changed output from the comparators 540, 542, the output of the delay circuits 550, 552 will change after a given time delay. By providing the time delay, a false triggering of the thyristors may be prevented and/or reduced. The output from the delay circuits 550, 552 may provide thyristor trigger signals via diodes 588, 582 that cause corresponding ones of the thyristors to turn on into a conducting state.

[0241] In some embodiments, the delay circuits 550, 552 may provide different reference voltage signals relative to one another. For example, delay circuit 550 may provide a positive voltage relative to the neutral line for triggering thyristor TH1. Similarly, delay circuit 552 may provide a positive voltage relative to the inductor bottom terminal $L_{sub.TH}$.

[0242] While the above describes the self-triggering operation of the crowbar trigger circuit 530 during a start-up period, once the start-up period is over the normal operation of the crowbar module 520 is responsive to the arc flash trigger circuit 506. The crowbar trigger circuit 530 may receive a control voltage V_{cc} and ground into DC-DC converters 570, 572. In some embodiments, a first DC-DC converter 572 may provide a DC voltage that is capable of triggering the first thyristor TH1 and a second DC-DC converter 570 may provide a DC voltage that is capable of triggering the second thyristor TH2. The crowbar trigger circuit 530 may also receive an arc flash detection signal into a driver 580. In response, the driver 580 may energize optical switches 560 and 562, causing the DC voltages to be applied to the thyristors TH1, TH2 via diodes 584, 588.

[0243] Reference is now made to FIG. 28, which is a schematic block diagram illustrating an arc flash trigger circuit of the crowbar module as briefly described above regarding FIG. 24, according to some embodiments of the present invention. The arc flash trigger circuit 506 may receive a ground and an operating voltage V_{cc} , such as, for example, 24 V DC. A latch circuit 546 may receive and latch an alerted state of an arc flash signal received from an arc flash detection system 64. Some embodiments provide that the arc flash trigger circuit 506 includes a plurality of output triggers 544 that may be used to provide a trip signal to one or more circuit breakers and/or alarms.

[0244] In some embodiments, the arc flash trigger circuit 506 include a matrix 548 that is configured to receive a discrete digital input from a threshold selector 510 and to generate a current threshold value based on the value of the received digital input signal. Some embodiments provide that the threshold selector 510 may be a rotary switch that provides a discrete digital signal, such as a two bit binary signal. In such embodiments, different outputs of the threshold selector 510 may be

00, 01, 10 and 11. In some embodiments, the 00 may correspond to a default threshold current value that is used in the self-triggering operation of the crowbar module **520**. In this manner, the absence of a signal during a start-up period may correspond to the 00 binary value. By way of example, current threshold values corresponding to the different binary signals may include 6.3 kA, **500A**, 8 kA and 10 kA.

[0245] The arc flash trigger circuit **506** may provide a reliable voltage ($V_{sub.CC}$) to the three crowbar modules **520** after the first 2s from the start-up and may transfer the alarm signal from the arc flash detection system **64** to the three crowbar modules **520** without introducing any delay after the first 2s from the start-up.

[0246] In some example embodiments, the crowbar module **520** may be triggered when the current through the power line is above $I_{sub.TH}$ peak for a period of more than 2 ms. In that case, only the crowbar module **520** that is connected to the corresponding power line is self triggered each time the current goes above $I_{sub.TH}$. In some embodiments, the response time of the crowbar module **520** once triggered is around 300 μs .

[0247] Some embodiments provide that the crowbar module **520** may also be triggered when there is an alarm signal from the arc flash detection system **64**. In that case, all three crowbar modules **520** are triggered until the main circuit breaker **68** is tripped. Some embodiments provide that the response time of the crowbar module **520** once triggered, is less than 2 ms, and may typically be around 300 μs . Then, the crowbar module **520** will be in continuous trigger for a period of 100 ms.

[0248] Some embodiments provide that an arc flash and surge protection system may include a crowbar module as an electronic switch that is connected in series with an energy absorber. In such applications, there TOV (overvoltages) in the system that could damage the equipment. In this regard, a solution to direct part of the energy to a device that will absorb it may be advantageous. Some embodiments include an energy absorber that may be based on multiple metal oxide varistors (MOVs) that are connected in parallel to absorb the TOV event. For example, the voltage may be clamped during such an event by turning on the MOVs to conduct some current when the voltage is increased.

[0249] For example, for a 240V system, the peak voltage is 336V. The use of an MOV with a Maximum Continuous Operating Voltage (MCOV) of 250VAC as close as possible to the nominal voltage may be used such that during normal conditions the MOV will not conduct any current. The MOV may conduct a very small leakage current (~ 1 mA) at 336V. However, as the voltage is increased, the MOV may start conducting heavily in an effort to limit the voltage. In this case, the voltage cannot exceed the value of 1000V peak.

[0250] However, there are power systems that may need protection at much lower voltage levels, for example 700V instead of 1000V. In such cases, to reduce the protection level, MOVs with lower MCOV, i.e. thinner MOV disks, may be used. For example, the MOV may have a MCOV of 150VAC instead of 250VAC. In such cases, under normal operation the MOV may conduct a significant current (above a few Amps) that will force it to failure within a limited period of time (depending on the exact level of the conducted current). In this regard, an energy absorber may be used with an MOV having an MCOV of 150VAC in series with one another.

[0251] For example, reference is now made to FIG. **29**, which is a schematic block diagram illustrating a surge protection system used in protecting equipment according to some embodiments of the present invention. As illustrated, the arc flash, overvoltage, overcurrent and surge protection system **600** may include a crowbar device **602** that is connected between the different phase lines **L1**, **L2**, **L3**. The crowbar device **602** may be connected in series with multiple MOVs **605** that are connected to respective ones of the plurality of phase lines **L1**, **L2**, **L3**.

[0252] The crowbar device **602** may function as a switch that will connect the MOVs **605** that function as energy absorbers to the phase lines only when the voltage exceeds a given threshold. In some embodiments, the given threshold is about 600V, however, this is merely a non-limiting example. The MOVs **605** may conduct as much current as necessary to keep the voltage below 700

V. By way of example, based on the voltage-current curve of a 150VAC MOV, at 700 V, the MOV **605** may conduct 10 kA of current, which exceeds the current that can be produced by the TOV. As such, the phase lines **L1**, **L2**, **L3** cannot reach the 700V level.

[0253] Additionally, when the sinusoidal system voltage declines to cross the zero level, the impedance of the MOV will increase and will limit the current through the thyristor in the crowbar module **602**. Then when the current through thyristor in the crowbar device **602** goes below 200 mA, the thyristor will disconnect the energy absorber from the system. This may occur as soon as the system voltage drops below 280V peak approximately.

[0254] Brief reference is now made to FIG. **30**, which is a schematic block diagram illustrating a crowbar device as briefly described above regarding FIG. **29**, according to some embodiments of the present invention. The crowbar device **602** may include a plurality of thyristors **TH1**, **TH2**, **TH3** that are connected between the different pairs of the plurality of phase lines **L1**, **L2**, **L3**. A crowbar device trigger circuit **630** may include a rectification circuit **632** that receives three phase AC current from the plurality of phase lines **L1**, **L2**, **L3** and generates a corresponding DC signal. The crowbar device trigger circuit **630** may include a comparator **634** that receives the DC signal and a reference voltage V_r and compares the two signals. If the DC signal exceeds the reference voltage V_r , then the comparator **634** generates an output to a plurality of trigger drivers **636** that are configured to trigger the thyristors into a conduction mode responsive thereto. Once the DC signal drops below the reference voltage V_r , then the comparator **634** output changes state and the trigger drivers **636** turn off the thyristors.

[0255] Reference is now made to FIG. **31**, which is a schematic block diagram illustrating a surge protection system **60** used in protecting equipment according to some embodiments of the present invention. Instead of the line to line connection described above regarding FIGS. **29** and **30**, the arc flash, overvoltage, overcurrent and surge protection system may include a crowbar device **700** that includes MOVs **705** that are series connected with crowbar modules **720** from each phase line **L1**, **L2**, **L3** to neutral **N**. Since each phase line includes an independent MOV **705**/crowbar **720** module combination, then a fault at an individual phase line may be addressed without triggering the MOV **705**/crowbar module **720** combination of the other phase lines. Brief reference is now made to FIG. **32**, which is a schematic block diagram illustrating a crowbar module as briefly described above regarding FIG. **31**, according to some embodiments of the present invention. A crowbar device trigger circuit **730** may include a rectification circuit **732** that receives an AC phase current from a corresponding phase line and generates a corresponding DC signal. The crowbar device trigger circuit **730** may include a comparator **734** that receives the DC signal and a reference voltage V_r signal and compares the two received signals. If the DC signal exceeds the reference voltage V_r , then the comparator **734** generates an output to a trigger driver **736** that then activates an optical isolator **738**. The output from the optical isolator **738** is configured to trigger the thyristors **TH1**, **TH2** into a conduction mode responsive thereto. Once the DC signal drops below the reference voltage V_r , then the comparator **734** output changes state and the trigger driver **736** turns off the thyristors **TH1**, **TH2**.

[0256] With reference to FIGS. **33-35**, a crowbar system **800** according to further embodiments of the invention is shown therein. The crowbar system **800** includes a crowbar device **802** (corresponding to the crowbar device **502** of FIG. **24**), a trigger and alarm interface circuit unit **806** (corresponding to the trigger circuit **506** of FIG. **24**), and a remote threshold selector switch **807** (corresponding to the threshold selector **510** of FIG. **24**).

[0257] With reference to FIG. **33**, the crowbar device **800** includes three crowbar modules **810**, three SPDs **804**, a neutral conductor **NB**, line conductors **L1B**, **L2B**, **L3B**, and three current sensors **805**. The crowbar device **800** further includes a crowbar device housing **860** (shown in dashed lines) within which the crowbar modules **810**, SPDs **804**, conductors **NB**, **L1B**, **L2B**, **L3B**, and current sensors **805** are mounted, disposed and encased.

[0258] In some embodiments, the trigger and alarm interface circuit unit **806** and the remote

selector switch **807** are located outside of the crowbar device housing **860**. For example, the trigger and alarm interface circuit unit **806** may be located elsewhere in an electrical service cabinet containing the crowbar device **802** and the lines **L1**, **L2**, **L3** so that the trigger and alarm interface circuit unit **806** is better positioned for operator access or to detect activity in the cabinet. The remote selector switch **807** may be located a substantial distance (e.g., at least 20 feet) from the crowbar device **802**. For example, the crowbar device **802** may be located high above the ground on a tower while the remote selector switch **807** is mounted near ground level to enable convenient access by an operator.

[0259] The crowbar modules **810** correspond to the crowbar modules **520** of FIG. **24**. Each of the crowbar modules **810** is electrically and mechanically coupled to the neutral conductor NB (corresponding to neutral line N) and a respective one of the line conductors **L1B**, **L2B**, **L3B** (corresponding to the lines **L1**, **L2**, **L3**).

[0260] A respective SPD **804** (corresponding to the SPDs **104** of FIG. **24**; e.g., an MOV-based SPD) is mounted between and electrically connects the associated line conductor **L1B**, **L2B**, **L3B** and the neutral conductor NB in parallel to the associated crowbar module **810**.

[0261] The current sensors **805** correspond to the current sensors **505**. Each of the current sensors **805** is operatively mounted on a respective one of the line conductors **L1B**, **L2B**, **L3B** and has an output signal wire **805A** connected to the associated crowbar module **810**.

[0262] Each crowbar module **810** is also electrically connected by an electrical cable **806A** to the trigger and alarm interface circuit unit **806**. The remote selector switch **807** is in turn electrically connected to the interface circuit unit **806** by an electrical cable **807A**.

[0263] The crowbar modules **810** may be constructed and operate generally as described herein with regard to the crowbar module **210**, except as described below. Each module **810** may include a filler material corresponding to the filler material **218**; however, this filler material is not shown in FIG. **35**.

[0264] With reference to FIGS. **34** and **35**, the crowbar module **810** includes a module housing **811** defining an enclosed chamber **811A**. The module housing **811** includes an outer cover **812**, a removable cover or back plate **813**, and a base plate **815**. The outer cover **812** is provided with a rear side opening **812A**. The opening **812A** is closed and environmentally sealed by a removable cover or back plate **813**. The interface between the back plate **813** and the cover **812** about the opening may be hermetically sealed by a rubber seal **813A**. In some embodiments, the chamber **811A** is hermetically sealed or moisture sealed.

[0265] With reference to FIG. **35**, crowbar units **801**, **803** corresponding to the crowbar units **201**, **202** and a circuit board assembly **830** corresponding to the circuit board assembly **230** are disposed in the chamber **811A** between a coil assembly **820** (corresponding to coil assembly **220**) and a base busbar **814**.

[0266] The circuit board assembly **830** may include a snubber circuit corresponding to the snubber circuit of the circuit board assembly **230**.

[0267] An internal circuit board assembly **833** is secured to the back plate **813** in the chamber **811A**. The internal circuit board assembly **833** may include the crowbar self trigger circuit **530** of the crowbar module **520** of FIGS. **25** and **26**. Advantageously, placing the trigger circuit **530** in the crowbar module housing **811** in close proximity to the thyristors **TH1**, **TH2** can reduce or prevent induced noise on the cables that might otherwise trigger the thyristors **TH1**, **TH2** accidentally.

[0268] An electrical connector **813B** is mounted on the back plate **813** to electrically connect the wires **805A**, **806A** to the circuit board assembly **830**, the circuit board assembly **833**, and the thyristors of the crowbar units **801**, **803**. The electrical connector **813B** may be environmentally sealed.

[0269] Various inventive aspects as disclosed herein may be used independently of one another. For example, a crowbar unit **201** including a cable gland **280** as described may be used without the unitarily assembling the crowbar unit **201** with a coil, busbars, a snubber circuit, and or another

crowbar unit.

[0270] Many alterations and modifications may be made by those having ordinary skill in the art, given the benefit of present disclosure, without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Therefore, it must be understood that the illustrated embodiments have been set forth only for the purposes of example, and that it should not be taken as limiting the invention as defined by the following claims. The following claims, therefore, are to be read to include not only the combination of elements which are literally set forth but all equivalent elements for performing substantially the same function in substantially the same way to obtain substantially the same result. The claims are thus to be understood to include what is specifically illustrated and described above, what is conceptually equivalent, and also what incorporates the essential idea of the invention.

Claims

1. A crowbar unit comprising: a unit housing comprising a wall and defining an enclosed chamber; a thyristor comprising an anode, a cathode and at least one gate disposed in the enclosed chamber; and, a cable gland disposed in a wire port of the wall of the unit housing extending between the enclosed chamber and an exterior of the unit housing, the cable gland configured to receive at least one electrical signal wire for electrically connecting to the at least one gate.
2. The crowbar unit of claim 1 further comprising: an electrically conductive first electrode electrically connected to one of the anode and the cathode; and an electrically conductive second electrode electrically connected to the other of the anode and the cathode.
3. The crowbar unit of claim 2 further comprising at least one biasing element loading at least one of the first and second electrodes against the thyristor.
4. The crowbar unit of claim 2, wherein the unit housing is configured as the first electrode.
5. The crowbar unit of claim 2 further comprising a piston-shaped member configured as the second electrode.
6. The crowbar unit of claim 1 further comprising at least one electrical signal wire extending through the cable gland from the exterior of the unit housing and electrically connected to the at least one gate.
7. The crowbar unit of claim 6, wherein the cable gland is bonded to the at least one electrical signal wire.
8. The crowbar unit of claim 6, wherein the cable gland comprises a sealing plug surrounding the at least one electrical signal wire.
9. The crowbar unit of claim 6, wherein a first gate of the at least one gate is a control terminal and a first electrical signal wire of the at least one electrical signal wire is connected to the control terminal.
10. The crowbar unit of claim 6 further comprising a second electrical signal wire of the at least one electrical signal wire connected to a reference terminal of the thyristor.
11. The crowbar unit of claim 1 further comprising an end cap disposed opposite an end wall of the unit housing; wherein the end cap, the unit housing and the cable gland seal the enclosed chamber.
12. The crowbar unit of claim 1, wherein the thyristor is a bi-directional thyristor.
13. The crowbar unit of claim 1, wherein the cable gland is a pressure-dependent valve configured to vent internal pressure of the enclosed chamber.
14. The crowbar unit of claim 13, wherein the pressure-dependent valve is configured to vent internal pressure in response to a pressure in the enclosed chamber exceeding a threshold pressure in a prescribed range resulting from the crowbar unit being exposed to a fault current exceeding a threshold current.
15. The crowbar unit of claim 1, wherein the thyristor is electrically connected between two electrical phase lines.

16. The crowbar unit of claim 1, wherein the thyristor is electrically connected between an electrical phase line and an electrical neutral line.

17. A crowbar system comprising: a crowbar unit comprising: a unit housing comprising a wall and defining an enclosed chamber; a thyristor comprising an anode, a cathode and at least one gate disposed in the enclosed chamber; and, a cable gland disposed in a wire port of the wall of the unit housing extending between the enclosed chamber and an exterior of the unit housing, the cable gland configured to receive at least one electrical signal wire for electrically connecting to the at least one gate; and a trigger circuit electrically connected to a first gate of the at least one gate by an electrical signal wire extending through the cable gland from the exterior of the unit housing.

18. The crowbar system of claim 17, wherein the trigger circuit is configured to activate the crowbar unit in a conductive state.

19. The crowbar system of claim 17, wherein the cable gland is a pressure-dependent valve configured to vent internal pressure of the enclosed chamber.

20. The crowbar system of claim 19, wherein the pressure-dependent valve is configured to vent internal pressure in response to a pressure in the enclosed chamber exceeding a threshold pressure in a prescribed range resulting from the crowbar unit being exposed to a fault current exceeding a threshold current.
