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## Bell Takes Homeland Security Experience to Europe

### Center for Homeland Defense and Security

Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California

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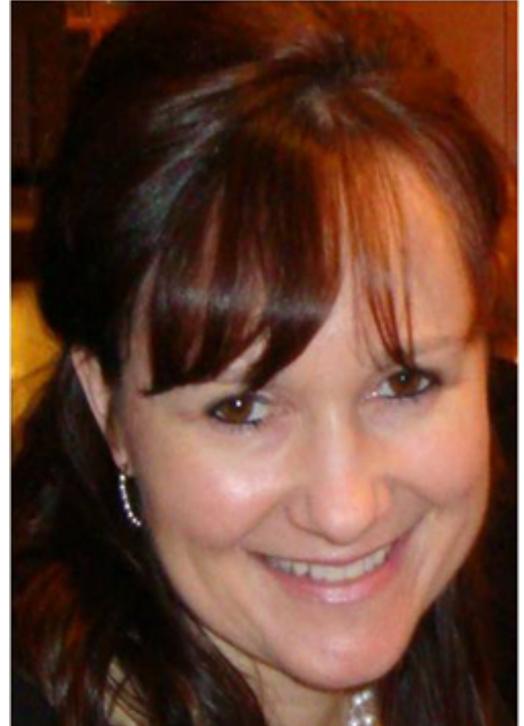
# Bell Takes Homeland Security Experience to Europe

 [chds.us/c/item/689](https://chds.us/c/item/689)

Christina Bell's new job tasks may sound familiar to fellow graduates of the Naval Postgraduate School Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS).

Inter-agency collaboration, breaking down organizational and jurisdictional barriers – all are concepts stressed as part of a CHDS education. And, both are part of Bell's task in her new position as the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) advisor to U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) in Stuttgart, Germany.

In June, Bell began working as part of an effort at USEUCOM to integrate with a string of federal agencies into a synthesized homeland security and defense advisory program within the context of the U.S. Department of Defense's (DoD) combatant command, USEUCOM. Those agencies include DHS, the Departments of Justice, State, Treasury, and Energy, as well as academic representation. Bell represents CBP to see how that agency's expertise could be used. Bell credits her CHDS experience for giving her access to a rich interagency network as well as a deep understanding of how to approach issues that blur organizational lines.



"I'm part of a big interagency team," Bell said by phone. "The idea is for us to be on the staff and to speak to our equities, let them know what we are experts at and how our agency can realize synergy with USEUCOM."

The workday involves an array of meetings and conferences in which Bell seeks ways for CBP to apply its know-how and contribute to defense and security issues in Europe. For example, her agency could be helpful in assisting growing European nations with their immigration, customs, and border issues.

There isn't a prescribed duty day, nor is it a static job description for this role. The goal is, Bell said, to link organizations that have a homeland security function and to determine how CBP could fit into various efforts.

"I'm trying to find synergy," she said. "That's my role."

Working across organizational bounds is just the kind of endeavor that is encouraged at CHDS, and Bell credits her education at the Center with fostering her ability to view issues from the perspective of other agencies.

"The whole blurring of lines to get the mission done, I knew about that but the Center help me gain an understanding of those problems we have in government," Bell said. "Everybody has their bias, but this was an opportunity to look at things critically and see issues from somebody else's vantage point. That is helpful for this position." Bell is also a Military Police officer in the U.S. Army Reserve. While in Stuttgart, she is performing her duty with the 202nd MP (CID) Group.

After her initial active duty service, she held a succession of positions in the private sector and the federal government in which she was often tasked with organizational building and shaping. She served as a Senior Liaison Officer for the DHS Executive Secretariat and as the Director of CBP's Executive Secretariat, during which time she earned her master's degree at CHDS. Prior to these DHS assignments, she worked in the private sector as

an executive with Accenture LLC.

Her thesis centered on a leadership and organizational strategy for DHS. Upon hearing about the CHDS program, she immediately pursued the opportunity so that she could advance her knowledge and skills and help contribute to the emerging academic and practitioner-oriented discipline of homeland security.

Bell applied her organizational skills at DHS when the department was in its early years and the sub-agencies under the DHS umbrella were struggling with how to fit together within the new departmental context and structure.

"We built a mechanism at the headquarters to help the DHS components plug in," she said. "This was critical to enable the Secretary's Office to receive fully coordinated decision-making information that represented the wide array of views of the DHS component agencies."

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